

A STUDY OF THE MYSTICISM OF SERVICE AND MORALITY
IN THE *PERIYA PURĀṆAM* OF *CĒKKIḷĀR*

by

MILROY REGINOLD FERNANDO

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ABSTRACT

The thesis explores the mysticism of service and moral living of the *nāyaṇmār* through a comprehensive study of the Tamil literary and devotional masterpiece i.e. the *Periya Purāṇam* or the ‘Great Epic Narrative’. As a twelfth century poetical hagiography that reflects the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* or Tamil spiritual leaders, the mysticism of this sacred and canonical text of Tamil *Śaivism* is neither appreciated, as it deserves to be, nor has it been sufficiently studied in academia. The modest research is intended to fill a vacuum in the literature of Tamil *Śaiva* mysticism. Besides this primary purpose, the research aims to make an academic contribution by introducing this mysticism of service and moral living of the *nāyaṇmār* as narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam* to a wider academic community and to the Tamil *Śaiva* religious community at large.

The claim is that this mysticism that is embedded in the text has been largely overlooked. Through an integral approach of hagiographical-apologetic and thematic exegesis, it is argued that *Cēkkiḷār*, the author, by imbuing himself in the mystical quest of the early Tamil literary, moral and devotional traditions, textured around these *nāyaṇmār*, initiates a way to *Śiva* that was foreign to the Tamil tradition of his milieu. *Cēkkiḷār* shapes his mystical theology and ideology in the form of two aims i.e. service and moral living. By his radical theology of *Siva*, he presents a theology of service and moral living which is ‘Person’ centred and a mystical thirst for Transcendence which is ‘Divine’ oriented. This interplay of cosmic and meta-cosmic levels of mystical experience provided a worldview, an alternative vision for political and social change in Tamil society.

DEDICATION

To my father Mr. Francis Fernando and to my mother Mrs. Augusta Fernando who always remind me to 'EMBRACE the 'UNCERTAINTY' and to 'EXPLORE the MYSTERY'.

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I acknowledge with thankfulness the kindness that was shown me by the authorities and officials of the University of Birmingham, College of Arts and Law Graduate School, the University of Birmingham Main library, the Orchard Learning and Resource Centre at Selly-Oak and the Central Library Birmingham. I also recall with gratitude Prof. Aloysius Pieris S.J., the founder and director of 'Tulana'- Centre for Research Dialogue and Encounter, Sri Lanka. I am grateful for his support and solidarity in prayer and to the members of his research institute, who helped me obtain materials from different places and encouraged me in my work.

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TRANSLITERATION AND ARTICULATION OF TAMIL WORDS

The Tamil words are transliterated and based on the format given by the online version of the University of Madras' 'Tamil lexicon' from the Digital Dictionaries of South Asia. The data for this dictionary which was originally published by Madras University 1924-1936 and was most recently updated in June 2007. All the terms that are transliterated are *italicized* with appropriate diacritics. The terms that are standardized in Anglicized form, their conventional English spelling is used, e.g. Tamil rather than *Tamiḷ*. The possessive cases of certain Tamil words are shown in English by adding an apostrophe 's' to the end of word, e.g. *Periya Purāṇam's*. For names of deities, because of their conventional commonality, the Sanskrit equivalent of Tamil words are preferred; *Śiva* rather than *Civan* in Tamil.

Vowels:

Short vowels:

அ	=	a	-	apple
எ	=	e	-	edible
இ	=	i	-	fit
ஒ	=	o	-	rotate
உ	=	u	-	prune

Long vowels:

ஆ	=	ā	-	far
ஏ	=	ē	-	make
ஈ	=	ī	-	feet
ஓ	=	ō	-	orange
ஊ	=	ū	-	broom

Diphthongs:

ஐ	=	ai	-	fight
ஔ	=	au	-	bout

Consonants:

As in English

க	=	k	-	kindle
ச	=	c	-	sit
ட	=	ṭ	-	tone
த	=	t	-	tide
ந	=	n	-	nut
ண்	=	ṇ	-	new
ன்	=	ṇ	-	many
ற்	=	ṛ	-	proud
ர்	=	r	-	root
ங	=	ṅ	-	sing
ஞ	=	ñ	-	bunion
ம்	=	m	-	mad
ப்	=	p	-	palm
ய்	=	y	-	yell
ல்	=	l	-	lenses
ள்	=	ḷ	-	loot
ற்	=	ḷ	-	let
வ்	=	v	-	vat

ABBREVIATIONS

Aka.	Akanānūru	(அகநானூறு)
Aiṅk.	Aiṅkurunūru	(ஐங்குருநூறு)
Kuru.	Kuruntokai	(குறுந்தொகை)
Nar.	Narṇai	(நற்றினை)
Pari.	Paripāṭal	(பரிபாடல்)
Pati.	Patiruppattu	(பதிற்றுப்பத்து)
Pura.	Puranānūru	(புறநானூறு)
PP.	Periya Purāṇam	(பெரிய புராணம்)
Tiru.	Tirumurukāruppāṭai	(திருமுகாற்றுப்படை)
Tēv.	Tēvaram	(தேவாரம்)
TM.	Tirumantiram	(திருமந்திரம்)
TT.	Tāyumāṇavaṭikaḷ Tiruppāṭalkaḷ	(தாயுமானவர் திருப்பாடல்கள்)

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

1. **Primary Source:** The primary source of this study is *Cēkkiḷār's* text entitled the *Periya Purāṇam*. In its literary style, it is primarily a poetical hagiography. There are several editions and reprints. Nadarasan's (2007) edition of *Daiva Cēkkiḷār Cuvāmikaḷ Aruḷiya Tirttoṇṭar Purāṇam Ennum Periya Purāṇam* (தெய்வச் சேக்கிழார் சுவாமிகள் அருளிய திருத்தொண்டர் புராணம் என்னும் பெரியபுராணம்) is considered authoritative. All references in this study are taken from this edition. This is the latest edition of the complete works of the *Periya Purāṇam* in four volumes. The edition offers a readable presentation of *Cēkkiḷār's magnum opus* in Tamil prose. This is a further reason for the preference of this edition.
2. **References and Translations:** All the translations from the Tamil text of the *Periya Purāṇam* are mine. When references are cited in the original text which is in poetry, for readable purpose and for the flow of the thesis, the references are presented in English prose style rather than in the original poetic form.
3. **Abbreviations:** References in texts in the *Periya Purāṇam* are shown as abbreviations, e.g. (PP).
4. **Verse numbers:** For easy reference purpose, any references to the texts in the *Periya Purāṇam* are shown in brackets with verse numbers. They follow the verse division employed by Nadarasan's (2007) edition of *Daiva Cēkkiḷār Cuvāmikaḷ Aruḷiya Tirttoṇṭar Purāṇam Ennum Periya Purāṇam* (தெய்வச் சேக்கிழார் சுவாமிகள் அருளிய திருத்தொண்டர் புராணம் என்னும் பெரியபுராணம்), e.g. (PP. 00).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this thesis is to explore and examine the ideals of devoted service

(தொண்டு: *tonṭu*)¹ and moral life (நன்னெறி: *nannēri*)² which is embedded in *Cēkṭilār's*

¹ The theme of grasping the Lord's feet or of the devotee of the Lord blends easily into a major motif in the *Periya Purāṇam*: service to the Lord. *Cēkṭilār* himself notes:

‘...I place my head beneath the sacred feet of that great man, and proceed to recount the deeds of *Meyporul*, kind of *Cēti* land...’ (PP. 466).

‘...அப்பெரியவர் தம் தூய அடிஇணை தலைமேல் கொண்டு மெய்ப்பொருள் சேதி வேந்தன் செயலினை விளம்பல் உற்றேன்’ (பெ.பு. 466).

The most frequent word used for service (*aṭimai* : அடிமை) and servant (*aṭiyēṇ* : அடியேன்) both contain the noun for foot *aṭi* (அடி). The word used to denote the devotee in Tamil i.e. *aṭiyār* (அடியார்) is also derived from this root *aṭi* (அடி) meaning foot. The devotee is one who has taken refuge at the feet of the Lord, as his slave or servant, or who has placed his head beneath the Lord's feet (PP.1189).

‘...மனம் முதலாயின மூன்றும் அண்ணலார் சேவடியின் சார்பு ஆக அணை விப்பார் புண்ணிய மெய்த் தொண்டர் திருக்குறிப்பு...’ (பெ.பு.1189).

‘...he had dedicated himself, in thought, word and deed to the feet of the Lord. Because of his ability to serve the servants of the Lord...’ (PP.1189).

Despite the originally disagreeable associations in Indian culture connected with touching someone else's feet and the degrading associations of service itself, service for *nāyaṇmār* is not a disagreeable chore that must be performed in order to gain the highest goal, but that is the end as well the means. There is no higher goal than to serve the Lord and the Lord's devotees. Almost all the narratives of the lives of the *nāyaṇmār*, *Cēkṭilār* uses *aṭimai* (அடிமை), *aṭiyēṇ* (அடியேன்) or some variant from the same root. Related to this is the image of the Lord taking the devotee as his captive, from the Tamil verb *āṭkol* (ஆட்கொள்). The most striking example of this is the incident *Veṇṇeynallūr*, where the Lord appeared as a Brahmin to claim *Cuntarar nāyaṇār* as his slave on his wedding day (PP. 174-216). It could be argued, therefore, that ‘slave’ would be more accurate translation than ‘servant,’ and ‘slavery’ or ‘servitude’ than service, but it is chosen here the more positive English term, partly because the religious meaning is so overwhelmingly positive. What justifies this further is the other Tamil word that is commonly used for devotee in the *Periya Purāṇam* is *tonṭar* (தொண்டர்), from the noun *tonṭu* (தொண்டு), meaning service. This term carries the sense that the loving relationship which the devotee enjoys with the Lord is naturally and invariably expressed in practical and devoted service. The title which *Cēkṭilār* himself gave to his epic is *Tirut tonṭar Purāṇam* (திருத்தொண்டர் புராணம்) i.e. ‘The History of the Holy Servants’ of the Lord (PP.10). For further discussion on the concept of service in the *Periya Purāṇam*, see Chapter 7.

² The adjective moral is synonymous with ‘good’ or ‘right.’ *Cēkṭilār* has dealt with moral questions i.e. of what is ‘right’ and ‘good’ in the context of a typical *Śaivite* motive and vocation. For this to be clear, *Cēkṭilār* has portrayed a variety of meaningful incidents of saintly conduct of the *nāyaṇmār*. *Cēkṭilār* notes:

‘...தருக்கிய ஐம்பொறி அடக்கி மற்று அவர்தம் தாள்வணங்கி ஒருங்கிண நெஞ்சு உடையார்க்கே அணித்துஆகும் உயர்நெறியே’ (பெ.பு.4164).

‘...They have subdued their five proud senses, concentrated their minds upon a single point and offer worship at his feet. Theirs is the noble path’ (PP. 4164).

Again *Cēkṭilār* exclaims:

‘...ஆர்வம்மிகும் அன்பிராய் முப்போதும் அர்ச்சிப்பார்...’ (பெ.பு.4165)

(சேக்கிழார்) *Periya Purāṇam* (பெரிய புராணம்)³. As a twelfth century work of the Tamil devotional and literary masterpiece, the *Periya Purāṇam* praises and honours the mystical legacy of the canonical saints⁴ of Tamil *Śaivism* known as ‘*nāyaṇmār*’ (நாயன்மார்) or ‘leaders’ (plural: *nāyaṇmār*: நாயன்மார்; singular: *nāyaṇār*: நாயனார்)⁵ who lived in the

‘...with unwavering love they offer worship ...’ (PP. 4165).

It is evident, therefore, in the *Periya Purāṇam*, motives rather than rulers, love’s implications rather than law prevailed in the Tamil *Śaiva* culture to judge *Śaiva* morality. It was on this fundamental concept of love (*anpu*: அன்பு) that the *Periya Purāṇam* justifies the code of life that nothing of itself can be labelled as false or incorrect. The pathway to *Śiva* in *Periya Purāṇam* proclaims the unique truth of how a whole nation with one accord considered the superiority of the love for *Śiva* as the noble path to god (உயர்நெறி: *uyārneri*) and upheld it as *nāyaṇmār*’s supreme goal in life. *Śaiva* morality of Tamils, therefore, is a ‘way of life’. It becomes evident in the *Periya Purāṇam* in particular significant situations where self-denying, self-effacing love forms the major criterion. It must be also noted that the word ‘moral’ has several expression in Tamil. Tamil Lexicon of the Madras University uses the words *naḷḷolukkam* (நல்லொழுக்கம்) or *naṇṇaṭattai* in the sense of explaining one’s moral conduct. However, the word நன்னெறி (*naṇṇeri*) is used to explain one’s righteous conduct, path of virtue and moral life. For further discussion on the moral life of the *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam*, see Chapter 8.

³ The title which *Cēkkiḷār*, the author, himself gave to his epic is *Tiruttonṇar Purāṇam* or ‘The Narrative of the Holy Servants’ (PP. 10).

‘...I shall call this work “The History of the Holy Servants of the Lord” (PP. 10)

‘...திருத்தொண்டர் புராணம் என்பாம்’ (பெ.பு. 10).

But later scholars, having concerned the grand literary style and remarkable context, called it the *Periya Purāṇam* (பெரிய புராணம்) i.e. the ‘Great Legendary History’. The word ‘*Purāṇam*’ (புராணம்) in Tamil literally means ‘old’ or ‘ancient treatise’ or ‘stories’ of the olden tradition. The *Periya Purāṇam* focuses its entire attention on the virtuous lives and noble deeds of the devotees of *Śiva* who were historical and non-mythical personages. Though historical evidences are not available in the case of a few devotees, the names and their marvelous deeds have been fittingly and in some cases briefly stated by *Cēkkiḷār* in his work. Hence, the word ‘*Purāṇam*’ in the *Periya Purāṇam* points out the life-portrayal of the sacred band of *Śaiva* devotees who lived with rich religious practices and richer spiritual experiences. *Cēkkiḷār* uses the word ‘*mākkatai*’ (மாக்கதை) i.e. the magnificent stories with a prefix word ‘*eḷukkum*’ (எடுக்கும்) which means to ‘start with’ or ‘uplift’ (PP. 3).

‘எடுக்கும் மாக்கதை இன்தமிழ்ச் செய்யுளாய் ... நமக்கு அருள் செய்திடத் தடக்கை

ஐந்துஉடைத் தாழ்செவி...’ (பெ.பு. 3).

‘In our hearts we enthrone *Gaṇapati* ... may he grants to us the honor of telling this great story...’ (PP. 3). *Cēkkiḷār* prays to Lord *Gaṇapathi* to bestow his help for the successful completion of this proposed work. The *Periya Purāṇam* is a great story; merely it is not a collection of different narrations but contains a running description appropriate to be called a grand epic.

⁴ There is actually no word in Tamil or in any Indian language that carries the precise meaning of the English word ‘saint’. The word in various Indian languages that denote ‘saint-like’ figure generally refers to persons associated with specific traditions and are not applicable in a more universal sense. For example, the Tamil term *nāyaṇmār* is used in the *Periya Purāṇam* to denote ‘saint’ in a more general sense. *Cēkkiḷār* himself sings of saintly conduct of the *nāyaṇmār* in a single sentence ‘*Pūcum nīrupōl uḷḷum puṇitarkaḷ*’ (பூசும் நீருபோல் உள்ளும் புனிதர்கள்) i.e. ‘...The whiteness of the ash reflects the purity or saintliness of their hearts...’ (PP. 141).

⁵ The origin of the word ‘*nāyaṇār*’ (நாயனார்) is traced to the Tamil word ‘*nāyakaṇ*’ (நாயகன்). The word ‘*nāyakaṇ*’ means ‘lord’, ‘master’ and ‘leader’. It is also used to refer to and to address an honoured person and a faithful husband. The word became ‘*nāyan*’ (நாயன்) meaning ‘faithful’ or ‘hero’; by gaining the respectful suffix ‘*ār*’ (ஆர்) and it became ‘*nāyaṇār*’ (நாயனார்) or leader to refer to the Tamil *Śaiva* saints as spiritual leaders as a way of giving respect to them. They are, as Peterson notes, ‘first “leaders” because

medieval Tamil period from the third to the ninth centuries after the Common Era. On its completion, the *Periya Purāṇam* was immediately placed as the twelfth book of *Tirumurai* (திருமுறை)⁶ or ‘Holy Books’ and was venerated as the last book that formed the entire *Śaiva* canon⁷. In its reflections on the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* as the historical embodiment of such an ideal of service and moral living, the radicalism of the *Periya Purāṇam* is considered not only as the ‘crown of Tamil epic [literature] ... great treasure of history’ (Jagadeesan, 2001, p. 3905), the pinnacle of the Tamil scriptural canon but it is also worshiped and venerated as the fifth Veda. As Peterson remarks, it ‘truly completes’ (1983, p. 340) the Tamil ‘Sacred Compendia’ (Cutler, 2003, p. 148).

The author of this mystical text i.e. *Cēkkiḷār* was a renowned minister in the court of king *Kulōttuṇṅka II* (குலோத்துங்கசோழன்) (1133-1150 A.C.E), who for his religious and social service later earned the title ‘*Toṇṭaimandalam nindru kāththa perumān*’ (தொண்டைமன்டலம் நின்று காத்த பெருமான்) – the great one who saved from *Thoṇṭai* land or *nātu* (நாடு); when *Toṇṭaimandalam* (தொண்டைமன்டலம்) was attacked by famine, it was *Cēkkiḷār* who saved the country from suffering (Jagadeesan, 2001, p. 3904). *Cēkkiḷār* was born at *Kunrathur* (குன்றத்தூர்) near Chennai, in the modern state

they are the first pilgrims to *Śiva*, and the first to give coherent and powerful expression to their experience of God in all the places familiar to Tamil devotees of *Śiva*’ (Peterson, 1982, p. 72).

⁶ *Tirumurai* (திருமுறை) or *Panniru Tirumurai* (பன்னிரு திருமுறை) forms the Tamil *Śaiva* Canon which comprises or brings together nearly 20,000 verses, the musings, meditations and affirmations of twenty-six singers or poets of South Indian *Śaivite* community, compiled by *Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi* (ca. 1000). For the significance of the *Periya Purāṇam* in relation to *Tirumurai*, see pp. 61-72 of the thesis.

⁷ When the *Periya Purāṇam* was completed, it is noted by *Cēkkiḷār* that the *Cōla* king, *Anapāyaṇ* wished to receive his book (PP. 8):

‘மேய இவ்வரை கொண்டு விரும்புமாம்...அநபாயன் அரசவை’ (பெ.பு. 8).

The King, his officers of the state and high priest of the temple assembled and listened to the exposition of the whole epic. After a most touching consecration ceremony in *Citamparam*, *Cēkkiḷār* was highly honoured by the king. Thereafter it was ordained that this *magnum opus* i.e. *Periya Purāṇam* consisting of an account of the lives and works of the *nāyaṇmār* should be included in the *Tirumurai* collection of the *Śaivite* canonical texts. This ordination was inscribed on copper plates along with the others and the eleven sacred books were preserved at the *Citamparam* temple, see Verma, 2012, p. 43.

of *Tamiḷnāṭu* (தமிழ்நாடு)⁸ named *aruḷmolithevar* (அருள்மொழிதேவர்). His intelligence and scholarship came to be widely known and king *Kulōttunnka* II appointed him as a minister of state and gave him the title *uttama-cōḷa pallavar* (உத்தமசோழ பல்லவர்).

Cēkkiḷār was born into the community of *vēḷāḷar* (வேளாளர்) or farmers. The community of *vēḷāḷar* was noted for their industry, ethical excellence, fortitude and integrity (PP. 51-85)⁹. Their one remarkable trait was hospitality and they were noted for their charitable deeds for the needy and the poor (PP. 76)¹⁰. The community of *vēḷāḷar* maintained their proud inheritance of integrity in all matters that they were sought after by the rulers to fill responsible positions as administrators and commanders of the army in various parts of *Tamiḷnāṭu* (PP. 4139)¹¹. Their outstanding and distinctive trait was their loving servitude to *Śiva* (PP. 4140)¹². *Cēkkiḷār*, who is also an exemplary torch-

⁸ Literally meaning the Land of the Tamils or Tamil country is one of the 28 states of India. Its capital is Chennai (formerly known as Madras), the largest city.

⁹ In the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkkiḷār* dedicates a whole section i.e. verses 51-85 entitled ‘The Glory of the Holy Land’ (திருநாட்டு சிறப்பு: *tiru nāṭṭu ciraṇṇu*) to sing the praises of the community of *vēḷāḷar* or farmers.

¹⁰ ‘அரக்கொள் கடன்கள் ஆற்றி மிகுதி கொண்டு அறங்கள் பேணி பரவு அரும்புடவுள்
போற்றி குரவரும் விருந்தும் பண்பின் விரவிய கிளையும் தாங்கி விளங்கிய
குடிகள் ஓங்கி வரைபுரை மாடம் நீடி மலர்ந்துள் பதிகள் எங்கும்’ (பெ.பு. 76).

‘The citizens of the land first pay their dues to the king, and then give alms in abundance. They provide for the worship of God and offer hospitality to visitors and to their honored relatives and rulers. Peopled with such citizens, the critics prosper, and towering palaces spring up on every side’ (PP. 76).

¹¹ Among the *nāyaṇmār* whose life stories are narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam* thirteen are from this community of *vēḷāḷar* and were all generals in the armed forces of kings. *Cēkkiḷār* narrates:

‘நலம் பெருகும் சோணாட்டு நாட்டியத்தான் குடிவேளாண் குலம் பெருக வந்துதித்தார் கோட்புலியார்
எனும்பெயரார் தலம்பெருகும் புகழ்வளவர் தந்திரியாராய் வேற்றுப் புலம் பெருகத்துயர் விளைப்பப்
போர்விளைத்துப் புகழ்விளைப்பார்’ (பெ.பு. 4139).

‘The glory of the *vēḷāḷar*, *Kōṭṭipuliyār* was born at *Nāṭṭipuliyāār* in the prosperous *Cōḷa* country. As commander of the army of the illustrious *Cōḷa* monarch, he waged war against his enemies near and far, won crushing victories and wide renown’ (PP. 4139).

The *nāyaṇmār*, mostly men but including few women, belonged to every caste and occupation in Tamil society, from kings and Brahmins, through military commanders and petty chieftains, well-to-do-merchants and land owners, down to the followers of menial occupations such as potter, washer man and leather-worker. For all the sixty three *nāyaṇmār* and the various strata of life they represent, see Appendix I.

¹² *Cēkkiḷār* sings of the *nāyaṇmār*:

bearer of his community whom he portrays as custodians of honesty, rectitude righteousness and munificence, understood these imageries as religious expressions (PP. 81-82)¹³. These were the foundational realities of a practical mystical experience, and an intensification of the relationship with the Lord *Śiva* rather than a religious experience that is qualitatively divorced from life (PP. 4150)¹⁴. He understood this intimacy with the Lord *Śiva* is not an emotional attachment of passivity but rather an effectual activity of service and moral living, inspired by an personal experience of *Śiva*. In other words, an experience which moved the *nāyaṇmār* to engage in service to others having set their hearts on *Śiva* (சித்தத்தைச் சிவன்பாலே வைத்தார்: *sittattaic śivanpālē vaittār*) (PP. 4162)¹⁵.

Cēkkiḷār understood such an religious engagement and expression to be pragmatic; he based his ideals of service (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*) and moral living (நன்னெறி:

‘He used all the generous prize money he received from the king to build up stocks of paddy in all the temples of the Lord *Śiva*...’ (PP. 4140).

‘மன்னவன்பால் பெறும் சிறப்பின் வளம்எல்லாம் மதிஅணையும் பிஞ்சுகூர்தம்
கோயில்தோறும் திருஅமுதின் படிபெருகச் செந்நெல் மலைக்குவடு ஆகச் செய்துவரும்
திருப்பணியே பல்நெடுநாள் செய்து ஒழுகும் பாங்கு புரிந்து ஓங்கும் நாள்’ (பெ.பு. 4140).

¹³ It is narrated that in their land:

‘The Vedas are taught and chanted. Sacrifice is offered and ritual performed...They practice yoga and penance ... virtuous sages walk their streets....many servants of the Lord live here, and in their homes recite the Vedas’ (PP. 81-82).

‘...வேதமும் கிடையும் எங்கும் யாகமும் சடங்கும் எங்கும் ... யோகமும் தவமும் எங்கும் ...
புண்ணிய முனிவர் எங்கும் ... தொண்டர்தம் இருக்கை எங்கும் சொல்வது இருக்கை எங்கும்’ (பெ.பு. 81-82).

¹⁴ At the end of his narration of the life story of *Kōṭpuliyaṇ*, *Cēkkiḷār* notes:

‘We have offered worship at the feet of *Kōṭpuliyaṇ* who ... attained the feet of the Lord, who is father, mother, our nectar and our very life, and who is forever free...’ (PP. 4150).

‘அத்தனாய் அன்னையாய் ஆர்உயிராய் அமர்ந்துஆகி முத்தனாம் முதல்வன் தாள் அடைந்துகிளை
... கோட்புலியார் அடிவணங்கிக் கூட்டத்தில் பத்தராய்ப் பணிவார்தம் பரிசினையாம் பகுருவாம்’
(பெ.பு. 4150).

¹⁵ In the narration of the those who have set their hearts on *Śiva*, *Cēkkiḷār* notes:

‘...they have set their hearts on *Śiva*. These are they who by their service have attained the feet of the Lord...’ (PP. 4162).

‘...பூரணமெய்ப் பரஞ்சோதி பொலிந்து இலங்கு நாதாந்தத் தாரணையால் சிவத்து அடைந்து
சித்தத்தார் தனிமன்றுள் ... தொண்டின் வழி அடைந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 4162).

nanṇeri) of the *nāyaṇmār* on a practical and mystical theology of service and moral living as both the source of its departure and the objective of its arrival; in his case it was a thirst for a better social order irrespective of caste affiliation¹⁶. Only a person who is attached to *Śiva* can nourish such passion (PP. 4164)¹⁷. *Cēkkiḷār* believed that for such a theology to be both mystical and life giving and in order to facilitate a devotion that overflows in moral living and service it has to be *Śiva*-centred; it had to be one that prompts a transformation of society towards a contemplative and conscious living of *Śiva*-faith (PP. 10)¹⁸. In *Cēkkiḷār*'s perspective, devotion is inseparable from the concerns of daily life. It was his intention to re-kindle the closer link between the visions of seeking *Śiva*, an 'extraordinary' mystical experience, with that of the 'ordinariness' of human living or an everyday life of service and moral living.

In the prologue to his work *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkkiḷār* himself refers to his work as that which will 'dispel darkness imbedded in the human thought and that the life of the

¹⁶ The religious and social milieu in which the *Periya Purāṇam* was created participation in temple rituals and ritual behaviour demanded of an individual within the Tamil community was fixed by traditional rules found in *varnāśramadharma* i.e. 'religious-moral system of caste duties based on caste structure' (Vincentnathan, 1993, p. 161). Though, the origin of this traditional rule found in *varnāśramadharma* is not known, certainly it could be assumed that it served to legitimize variation based on family ritual practices, racial differences and occupational specialization. The *nāyaṇmār* belonged to every caste and occupation in Tamil society, from kings and Brahmins, through military commanders and petty chieftains, well-to-do-merchants and land owners, down to the followers of menial occupations such as potter, washer man and leather-worker. For all the sixty three *nāyaṇmār* and the various strata of life they represent, see Appendix I.

¹⁷ '...They have subdued their five senses, concentrated their minds upon a single point and offer worship at his feet. Theirs is the noble path' (PP. 4164).

‘...தருக்கிய ஐம்பொறி அடக்கி மற்று அவர்தம் தாள்வணங்கி ஒருங்கிணை நெஞ்சு உடையார்க்கே அணித்து ஆகும் உயர்நெறியே’ (பெ.பு. 4164).

¹⁸ ‘...இவ்வுலகத்து முன்னாள் தங்கு இருள் இரண்டில் மாக்கள் சிந்தையுள் சார்ந்து நின்ற பொங்கிய இருளை ஏனைப் புறஇருள் போக்கின்ய செங்கதிரவன் போல்நீக்கும் திருத்தொண்டர்...’ (பெ.பு. 10). ‘...from old age there have been two kinds of darkness on the earth. The bright rays of the sun dispel the darkness of the outer world. In like manner, the holy servants of the Lord dispel the brooding darkness in the hearts of men’ (PP. 10).

holy *nāyaṇmār* illumine the human heart’ (PP. 10)¹⁹. Thus, the mystical ideal of *Cēkkiḷār* was inspired and narrated through the life of sixty three *nāyaṇmār*. Their emphasis was on a life of reflection and engagement in which *Śiva* is experienced as domiciling in the Tamil region (PP. 2)²⁰. Intimacy with *Śiva* is explicit in service (PP. 140)²¹. It is apparent *Cēkkiḷār* was painfully aware of the evils embedded in the flourishing of a new culture that came into existence with the formation of the *Chālukya-Cōlas* which ruled the *Cōla* Empire from 1070 A.C.E until its collapse in the second half of the thirteenth century after the Common Era. This was his historical setting that prompted *Cēkkiḷār*’s hagiography in which he recounts the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* as models of religious expression of service and moral living.

In the *Periya Purāṇam*, which includes 4286 stanzas²², *Cēkkiḷār* attempts to give a solid foundation to a true Tamil *Śaiva* religiosity and society. He asserts that this goes

¹⁹ ‘... புறஇருள் போக்கின்ய செங்கதிரவன் போல்நீக்கும் திருத்தொண்டர்...’ (பெ.பு. 10).

²⁰ *Cēkkiḷār* notes that ‘At *Tillai* ... he performs his dance and grants his boons. In the worship of his golden feet, birth in this body and flesh and blood finds its true purpose’ (PP. 2).

‘ஊன் அடைந்த உடம்பின் பிறவியே தான் அடைந்த உறுதியைச் சாருமால் ... தில்லையுள் மா நடம்செய் வரதர்பொன் தாள்தொழு’ (பெ.பு. 2).

In another occasion it is narrated:

‘...The Lord of creation who took the ant-hill as His home ... dwells in the flower temple at *Tiruvārūr*...’ (PP. 136).

‘...ஆதி தேவர் அமர்ந்தபூங் கோயிலில்...’ (பெ.பு. 136).

It is this *Śiva* who took the holy mountain *Kailāsa* as His permanent abode (PP. 11)

‘...வாழ் கயிலைத் திரு மாமலை’(பெ.பு. 11).

For the conception and belief on *Śiva* as domiciling in *Tamiḷnāṭu*, see chapter 5 of the thesis.

²¹ ‘அத்தர் வேண்டிமுன் ஆண்டவர் அன்பினால் மெய்த்தழைந்து விதிப்பு உறுசிந்தையார் கைத்திருத்தொண்டு செய்கடப் பாட்டினார் இத்திறத்தவர் அன்றியும் எண்ணிலார்’ (பெ.பு. 140).

‘Long ago our Father chose to make these devotees His own. As their thoughts lovingly dwell upon Him, their bodies tremble and their hair stands on end. Their only duty is to serve Him...’ (PP. 140).

²² Scholars vary in their opinion of the number of the stanzas that are in the *Periya Purāṇam*. Five stanzas from 806-810 which are included in the edition that is used for this study are omitted in some other editions. Suppiramaniya Mutaliyār’s (1937-1953) edition of *Cēkkiḷār Periya Purāṇam* and McGlashan’s (2006) *The History of the Holy Servants of the Lord* contain only 4281 stanzas. Vanmikanathan (1985, p. 35) also seems to indicate that the *Periya Purāṇam* has only 4281 verses. Whereas other editions such as that of Rangachari (2008) and T.N Ramachandran’s (1990) *St. Sekkizhaar’s Periya Purāṇam* contain 4286

beyond all forms of conditioning of social systems such as caste classifications and promotes a pursuit of a meaningful living which could be understood, as an existential inclination for mystical service and moral living (PP. 142)²³. It was *Cēkkiḷār*'s belief that his work on the *Śaiva* religiosity of the *nāyaṇmār* could lead to a common transformation and disposition for moral living and service (PP. 4281)²⁴. Hence, the focus of this study is the explication of these ideals of service and moral living as narrated in poetic account of *Cēkkiḷār*'s *Periya Purāṇam*.

Such study of the ideals of service and moral living as explicated in the *Periya Purāṇam* will not only enable us understand why the ideals of service and moral living as presented in the *Periya Purāṇam* is distinctive but it will also provide some additional revelations and insight to aid us understand the distinctive contribution that *Cēkkiḷār* brought to the religiosity of Tamil *Śaivism*. It will demonstrate, that as a follower of *Śiva*, *Cēkkiḷār* has left a vital mystical legacy to Tamil *Śaivism*. The ultimate significance of *Cēkkiḷār*'s ideals lies not in his emphasis on seeking *Śiva* as an intellectual reality but it is on his emphasis that the *Śiva*-experience transforms the ordinary life of a devotee of *Śiva* in a new and radical way. It incites the human person with a distinctive kind of active

stanzas. It is indicated that the *Periya Purāṇam* originally had 4253 stanzas and another 33 stanzas were later interpolated into the original texts (Jagadeesan, 2001, p. 3905).

²³ '...They stand fast in the path of love, rock-like in virtue' (PP. 142).

'...ஓதுகாதல் உறைப்பின் நெறிநின்றார்...' (பெ.பு. 142).

²⁴ 'என்றும் இன்பம் பெருகும் இயல்பினால் ஒன்று காதலித்து உள்ளமும் ஓங்கிட மற்று உளார் அடியார் அவர்வான்புகழ் நின்றது எங்கும் நிலவி உலகெலாம்' (பெ.பு. 4286).

'So the celestial glory of the servants of the Lord, who dwells in the golden court, everywhere abides throughout all the worlds' (PP. 4286).

participation and direction; it is to exist humanly within a complex world with a vision of *Śiva* i.e. being with and in *Śiva*, is to be in his service (PP. 8)²⁵.

1.2 Originality of the Research

The originality of the study is in the very choice of the religious text i.e. the *Periya Purāṇam*. Despite its popularity in Tamil *Śaiva* devotional practices and as instructive material for religious education, little academic interest has been shown and there is a lack of scholarly publications on the subject of mysticism²⁶ of service and moral living in

²⁵ ‘அம்கண்ணை அடியாரை ஆராத காதலினால் பொங்கிவரும் உவகையுடன் தாம்விரும்பிப் பூசிப்பார்...’ (பெ.பு. 4154).
‘With uncomplainingly love and joy they delight in worshipping God and His servants...’ (PP. 4154).

²⁶ The term ‘Mysticism’ is more commonly applied to a variety of religious experiences. Most of the philosophers of religion and religious psychologists have endeavored to confine mystical experiences within the bounds of spiritual experience. Tamil Lexicon of the Madras University defines mysticism as a doctrine of deep thought to realize God (இறைநிலை இணைவுக் கோட்பாடு: *Iraṇilai iṇaivuk kōṭpāṭu*). It reflects the silence of the worshipper before the incomprehensible character of an experience of God. If this explanation is accepted as the standard one, then, mystical experience is understood in terms of ‘passivity’ and ‘numbness’. This view can be equated with a Tamil concept known as ‘*summa iru*’ (சும்மா இரு: ‘Be quiet or still’) which has a number of meanings with reference to the context – freedom, silence, often, inactivity etc. *Tāyumānavar*, philosopher-poet, mystic and scholar of the seventeenth century, and others have brought out the significance of this concept in their outpourings.

‘ஏதுக்குச் சும்மா இருமனமே என்னுனக்குப் போதித்த உண்மைஎங்கே போகவிட்டாய்-
வாதுக்கு வந்தெதிர்த்த மல்லரைப்போல் வாதாடி னாயேயுன் புந்தியென்ன போதமென்ன போ’
(தா.தி. 28. 5)

‘Remain still, mind, in the face of everything!’ This truth that was taught to you, where did you let it go? Like wrestlers, bent upon their bout, you raised your arguments. Where is your judgment?

Where, your wisdom? Be gone! (TT. 28.5).

In religious nomenclature it is used in the sense of preserving silence without speech or action while performing religious austerities. Probably, the saints of Tamil *Śaivism* might have derived the inspiration to keep themselves quiet in thought, word and deed from their intuitive experience as shown in their hymns. In Tamil devotional literature the exact equivalent word for mysticism is *anubhuti* (அனுபூதி). *Tāyumānavar* uses this word in more than one place. For instance, he says: ‘unless I am bestowed with irrevocable *anubhuti*, deception of mine cannot be overcome; what can I do, O Siva, the *paraparam*!’ [(மாறா அனுபூதி வாய்க்கின் அல்லால் என்மயக்கம் தேறாது என் செய்வேன் சிவமே பராபரமே’ (TT. 43.23)]. *Cēkkiḷār* gives a vivid picture of the *Śaiva* saints when they worship the Lord with all sincerity, in their psychological reactions and spiritual development. In spite of that in many places the author himself confirms that he is unable to adequately express the experiences of the saints. However, he delineates the experiences of *Cuntarar* when the latter beheld the vision of the dancing Lord at Tillai thus:

‘His five senses were all subsumed in the act of seeing, the four faculties of his mind in meditation, and the three qualities in pure enlightenment. At the awesome sight of the dancing Lord...’ (PP. 252).

‘ஐந்துபேர் அறிவும் கண்களே கொள்ள அளப்பு அரும் கரணங்கள் நான்கும்

the *Periya Purāṇam*²⁷. In fact, the few studies that do exist and circulate are mainly translations and occasional articles in academic journals²⁸. What should be noted is that many of these studies, for example Candraleka Vamadeva, The Concept of *Vaṇṇanpu*, "Violent Love," in Tamil *Śaivism*, with Special Reference to *Periya Purāṇam* (1995); Glenn E. Yocum, "Tests of Devotion Among the Tamil *Śaiva Nāyaṇmār*" (1972-1977, pp. 66-71); D. Dennis Hudson, "Violent and Fanatical Devotion Among the *Nāyaṇmār*: A Study in the *Periya Purāṇam* of *Cēkkiḷār*" (1989, pp. 373-404); George L. Hart III, "The Little Devotee: *Cēkkiḷār*'s Story of *Ciruttoṇṭar*" (1980, pp. 217-36); and David D. Shulman, The Hungry God: Hindu Tales of Filicide and Devotion (1993, 18-47), have shown a 'marked interest in the *Periya Purāṇam*'s violence' (Monius, 2004a, p. 167) as a 'metaphor for the single-minded intensity of devotion demanded by *Śiva*' (Monius, 2004a, p. 124-125); for the reason that most of the *nāyaṇmār* exemplified a fanatical and

சிந்தையே ஆகக் குணம் ஒரு மூன்றும் திருந்து சாத்துவிகமே ஆக இந்துவாழ் சடையான்
ஆடும் ஆனந்த எல்லைஇல்...' (பெ.பு. 252).

For *Cēkkiḷār*, mysticism is oneness and madness and this is what the thesis as demonstrated and contributes to the understanding of mysticism. Mysticism in the It implies a 'unifying' experience of the devotee to *Śiva* (*Śiva-jñānam* : சிவஞானம்) as well as a 'unifying' experience with other devotees who seeks a vision of *Śiva* to be in His service madly (*Śiva - toṇṭu* : சிவ தொண்டு) (PP. 342). This understanding of mysticism of the *Periya Purāṇam* as love of God which is expressed profoundly in their service to fellow devotees in a mystical state through the moral living is the contribution of this thesis to the understanding of mysticism. In their 'unitive' experiences of becoming one with Him, and seeing the unity of all things in *Śiva*, therefore, the *nāyaṇmār* promoted harmonious relationships with others, which is turn developed virtues of charity, forbearance and tolerance.

²⁷ The *Periya Purāṇam* is recited or sung at the end worship of *Śiva* in His form as the *liṅga* or 'image'. For details of the use of Tamil canonical texts in the daily worship of *Śiva* in temples, see Cutler, 1987, pp. 190-92. However, it must be also noted that the *Periya Purāṇam* has come under much criticism. It has been argued that the '*Periya Purāṇam* creates caste conflicts; *Periya Purāṇam* advocates caste differences; *Periya Purāṇam* portrays many acts inimical to one's self respect as devotion to god; *Periya Purāṇam* justifies murderous deeds as service to *Saivism*'. For the discussion on the *Periya Purāṇam* and the rationalist critique of *Śaivism*, see Vēṅkaṭācalapati, 2006, pp. 116-117.

²⁸ For a partial list of published editions and translation of the *Periya Purāṇam*, see Zvelebil, 1995, pp. 547-548.

‘violent’ devotion as a significant religious attitude in expounding their love (*anpu* : அன்பு)²⁹ to *Śiva*.

Hudson, for example, argues the shedding of blood in sacrifice is both the supreme manifestation of love, as the offering of one’s life to the beloved, whether in self-sacrifice or in the offering of a representative substitute; it is also the means by which offences against the love of God, may be expiated, by a payment of an ultimate price. Therefore for Hudson, violence has a power to cleanse one from such things that blocks one’s vision or offends the love of *Śiva*; whether it is a part of one’s body or others can be cleansed through their respective removal or slaughter. What is most pleasing to *Śiva*, therefore, is not the ‘violence’ itself but the passion of devotion that led the *nāyaṇār* to perform such acts (1989, pp. 373-75, 388, 390-91). Therefore, these extreme acts cannot simply be dismissed as the misguided enthusiasm of a few blind fanatics or devotees of *Śiva*. In the case of the *Ciruttoṇṭar* (சிறுத்தொண்டர்) *nāyaṇār* for example, it is God himself who is represented as demanding the gruesome sacrifice (PP. 3665-3752)³⁰; where the initiative does not lie with God himself, as in the case of *Kōṭṭipuli*

²⁹ The word *bhakti* itself occurs only infrequently in the *Periya Purāṇam*, in its Tamilized form of *patti* (பத்தி). More often in the sense of it, is conveyed by the Tamil noun *anpu* (அன்பு), which also means love or attachment, and which was used in the *Caṅkam* literature in the context of relationships between the sexes. For example *Cēkkiḷār* sings:

‘பத்தியின் பாலர் ஆகிப் பரமனுக்கு ஆளாம் அன்பர்...’ (பெ.பு. 72).

‘Just as in loving devotion the friend and servants of the Lord gather...’ (PP. 72).

Less frequently the noun *kātal* (காதல்) is used, which in modern usage commonly carries an erotic or romantic sense. The follower of this path of love is a devotee. Devotion is his/her distinguishing characteristic. In the *Periya Purāṇam*, the word *pattar* (பத்தர்) (= *bhaktar*, devotee) occurs occasionally. More frequent, as noted above in the verse 72 of the text, it is the term *anpar* (அன்பர்) i.e. lover from *anpu* (அன்பு) i.e. love, the one who loves and is loved, the friend of God.

³⁰ This *nāyaṇār* was an *Ayurvedic* physician and was, naturally, a scholar in *Sanskrit*; he was moreover skilled in the wielding of battle weapons. Later on, from his chronicle we shall learn that he was greatly skilled in dissecting a body. At heart and in deed, however, he was a servitor of the servitors of Lord *Śiva*. Once, in the course of his military duties, he led an elephant corps in a war against *Vāthāvi* in the north and returned a triumphant victor followed by a long train of loot on the backs of pack animals. When the king

(கோட்புலி) *nāyaṇār* (PP. 4139-4151)³¹, God clearly gives his approval to the deed and rewards his blood-thirsty servant. Some commentators from within the *Śaivite* tradition take this as a challenge to theodicy, and bluntly affirm that the ways of God lie beyond human question or scrutiny (e.g. Ramachandran, 1990). Kirubānantha Vāriyār (2000) defends *Ciruttoṇṭar*'s act as the expression of an enlightened attitude of mind that has attained freedom from attachment to his own child. Vanmikanathan sees the action of the Lord in some of the more extreme cases in a similar way: the Lord was seeking to help them 'wash away the the taints of the earthly attachments which bound them' (1985, pp. 343).

In some instances, while some scholars, such as Vanmikanathan and Gopalakrishnan, have acknowledged the *Periya Purāṇam* as 'one of the seminal texts of

was congratulating and honouring him, the chief ministers whispered in the ears of the king that *Ciruttoṇṭar nāyaṇār*'s main occupation and vocation was that of a servitor to the servitors of the Lord *Śiva*. Straightway the king apologised for taking him away from his vocation, and promptly released him from military service. On being released by the king, the *nāyaṇār* immersed himself in the discharge of his vocation of serving the servants of the Lord. One day, a devotee of *Śiva* came to *Ciruttoṇṭar*'s house. The devotee told *Ciruttoṇṭar*'s wife that he wanted to eat the human flesh of a young boy of handsome body and pious nature. The *nāyaṇār* and his wife decided to give his own son, as food, since he could not find any other boy. He brought his son from the school and told his wife to cut him and cook him as food for the devotee. The *nāyaṇār*'s wife did not hesitate even for a moment. They cut the son and cooked the body and kept the head separately. When the devotee came to consume the food, he asked for details. When *nāyaṇār*'s wife said that the body of a boy had been cooked, he also asked for the head to be cooked! A little later, the devotee asked *Ciruttoṇṭar*'s to come along with his son for eating. When the *nāyaṇār* replayed that his son would no longer be available in company, he said that he would eat along with the devotee. He was then told: 'Go and bring him'! Not willing to disobey the guest, the *nāyaṇār* and his wife, went outside and made a mock-call! The son, to their astonishment appeared before them and sat at the table. As the *nāyaṇār* and his wife were perplexed, Lord *Śiva* appeared with his son and His consort. The family immediately merged in *Śiva*'s abode (PP. 3665-3752).

³¹ This *nāyaṇār* was a commander-in-chief of the army of the *Cōḷa* king. While he led his life in this manner, one day the king sent him on a campaign against his enemies. Before he set out, he stored as much paddy as he could that it might last till his return. When he was away on the war-front, a great drought set in, bringing in its train a severe famine. His relatives decided that it is better to live by taking the grain stored for the offering of rice to the Lord than die of starvation. Meanwhile, *Kōṭṭipuli nāyaṇār* returned from the war and learnt about the crime committed by his relatives. Without them getting to know it, he decided to kill all his relatives. At the moment, the great Lord appeared to him and offered counsel (PP. 4139-4151).

Śaiva Siddhanta’ (Vanmikanathan, 1985, p.iii; Gopalakrishnan, 1990, pp. 9-10) by delineating the devotion of the *nāyaṇmār* of the *Periya Purāṇam* merely as an expression of love of *Śiva*, others such as Prentiss, have studied the text merely as that which ‘contextualizes the life of *nāyaṇmār* within imperial temple culture’ (1999, p. 117) and as a reaction against the growing influence of Sanskrit *Śaiva Siddhanta* in the *Cōla* period. Important to Prentiss’s understanding is the assertion that for ‘being a good *bhakta* includes being a good Tamil citizen’ (1999, p.74). Further, asserting that the passionate and patient lives of devotion of the *nāyaṇmār* of the *Periya Purāṇam* and their experience of *Śiva* located at sites of pilgrimage to be understood in the sense of conscious “participation” in the Divine (1999, p.24) and involves a ‘theology of embodiment’, that which is intentionally developed to define their own religious identity with the awareness of alternatives and defended over against intellectual and religious alternatives, Prentiss notes ‘participating’ in the Divine the devotees experience ‘bhakti embodied in words, actions, images of agents who gave it distinctive representation based on their engagement with their own historical contexts and rhetoric’ (1999, p. 11).

Monius, for example quoting Vamadeva, affirms this assertion that the *nāyaṇmār*’s fanatical devotion “project[s] [the] kingly role of the ancient and mediaeval Tamil region onto the lives and deeds of the *nāyaṇmār*” (2004a, p. 122). Violent and fanatical devotion of the *nāyaṇmār* is part of the Tamil literary tradition and that relationship between love and violence was a core element of the identity of the hero in the *Caṅkam*³² literature. Many of the *nāyaṇmār* drew inspiration from these warrior

³² For the study of the influence of the *Caṅkam* literature for the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam*, see pp. 27-49.

heroes of *Caṅkam* tradition to exemplify the extent of their devotion with violent imagery and presented themselves as not just religious but also as political heroes who sustained the Tamil *Śaiva* religion with their own blood and devotion during medieval period in *Tamiḷnāṭu*. ‘While an understanding of this startling violence must obviously play an important role in any interpretation of the text as a whole’ (2004a, p. 167), Monius asserts, *Periya Purāṇam* ‘is a rich and complex literary work that interweaves its images of violence with a number of other significant themes (2004a, p. 167). For Monius, therefore, *Periya Purāṇam* ‘has a rich literary and intellectual agenda of its own’ (2004a, p. 168). The *Periya Purāṇam*, Monius argues, ‘offers a unique theological vision of Siva that would prove to have a lingering impact on the Tamil Saiva tradition in the centuries following *Cēkkiḷār*’ (2004a, p. 168). ‘Drawing on the complex images of Siva found’ in the Tamil devotional tradition, for Monius, *Periya Purāṇam* presents ‘a theology of Siva as heroic father and warrior-lord that departs significantly from earlier poetic visions of the deity as playful lover, charming mendicant, and devoted spouse’ (2004a, p. 168).

The goal, however, is union with the Lord, where all intervening boundaries are dissolved. The paradigm of such a boundary-less union in human relation is the infant feeding at the mother’s breast. It is natural that the oral domain of hunger and feeding becomes the arena in which the impulses arising from love of God is acted out. Love is oral, both the devotee and for God (Shulman, 1993). For Shulman, therefore, ‘God appears to generate a violent hunger that drives him continuously toward this world’ (1993, p. 38) and that ‘violent subtraction remains the favored mode of connecting with the real’ (1993, p. 144). By giving detailed attention to the story of *Ciruttoṇṭar* in

Cēkḱilār's Periya Purāṇam, Shulman points out, that *Ciruttoṇṭar* as a 'devotee [is] also hungry, even desperate, for the autonomy and triumph that come with successfully force-feeding the object of his devotion' (1993, p. 44). However what clearly emerges from Shulman's argument is that 'the sacrifice proceeds out of a divine command or from a demand made on the father, implicitly or otherwise, by the metaphysical ultimate' and that it has 'no easily recognizable or comprehensible logic, above all, no utilitarian explanation or rationale' (1993, p. 6). Despite significant differences, all the stories of the *Periya Purāṇam* conform to a single fact that love and hunger for God bound the devotees into a tightly knit company of mutual loyalty and respect, in which conventional social distinctions of caste, rank, wealth, occupation and gender were transcended. In this perfect spiritual democracy even the one's born of lower status of society gain entry into the previously forbidden territory of Lord's temple (PP. 1046-1052)³³.

It must be pointed out, on the other hand, that the approach to the *Periya Purāṇam* in Tamil academia has been largely from the point of view of Tamil literature and history. The works of scholars such as Gnanasambandam's (1987) *Periya Purāṇam: ōru āyvu* (பெரிய புராணம்: ஒரு ஆய்வு); Kantacāmik Kavirāyar's (1978) *Periya Purāṇam: Ilakkiya Corpolivu* (பெரிய புராணம்: இலக்கியச் சொற்பொழிவு); Natarajan's (1982) *Periya Purāṇam Muttukal* (பெரிய புராணம் முத்துக்கள்); Vēṅkatarāmaiya's (1999)

³³ The story of *Tirunālaippōvār* as narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam* is significant in this regard. It is made clear in the narration that this *nāyaṇār* despite being a member of the lower caste was a devotee of *Śiva*. His ardent desire was to see and worship the dancing *Śiva* at *Citamparam*. Since, the people of his clan were kept away from entering the temple; he kept on delaying his visit to the temple. Finally, taking courage, he went to see the Lord at the temple. But *Nandi* or the Holy cow which stood in front of the Lord blocked his view of the Lord, as he stood outside the temple. The Lord felt the plight of his devotee and made the cow to move aside so that the devotee could see him. While narrating the biography of *Tirunīlanakkar* (PP. 1834-1870), *Cēkḱilār* emphasises that the Lord is more pleased with love than ritual worship.

Periya Purāṇa Varalārukalum Mutumoli Venpākkalum (பெரிய புராண வரலாறுகளும் முத்தழில் வெண்பாக்களும்); Gnanasambandam's (1999) *Cēkḱilār Thanthe Celvam* (சேக்கிழார் தந்த செல்வம்); Paramasivam's (1987) *Cēkḱilārin Ilakkiyathiran* (சேக்கிழாரின் இலக்கியத்திறன்); Kāmātcī's (1993) *Periya Purāṇam Kāṭṭum Camutāyanilai* (பெரிய புராணம் காட்டும் சமுதாயநிலை) have studied the *Periya Purāṇam* from a purely Tamil literary perspective. Other works such as Paramasivam's (1992) *Periya Purāṇam Kāṭṭum Panpātu* (பெரிய புராணம் காட்டும் பன்பாடு); Cuntaracuvāmikal's (1986) *Periya Purāṇaththil Camutāya Nōkku* (பெரிய புராணத்தில் சமுதாய நோக்கு) have approached the *Periya Purāṇam* as a study of the socio-cultural relevance of the text. The works of Krishnan (1999), *Arulpetra Nāyaṇmārkal* (அருள்பெற்ற நாயன்மார்கள்); Supirayalu (2007), *Periya Purāṇaththil Thiruvilaiyadal* (பெரிய புராணத்தில் திருவிலையாடல்); Civapātacuntaram's (1978) *Cēkḱilār Aṭiccuvaṭṭil Arupattumūvar Varalārum Yāttiraiyum* (சேக்கிழார் ஆதிச்சுவட்டில் அறுபத்துமூவர் வரலாறும் யாத்திரையும்) have studied the *Periya Purāṇam* from a religious perspective. However, little attention has been paid to the subject of mysticism of service and morality which is unique to *Cēkḱilār's Periya Purāṇam*.

As a text that personifies the religious and cultural revolution that took place among the Tamil *Śaiva* community of the period, 'historically and thematically – from poetic expression of devotion to the philosophical formulation of the path' (Monius, 2004a, p. 167) - the *Periya Purāṇam* presents a mystical ideology to effect a personal and social transformation (PP. 35)³⁴, seeking to foster a search for God in the oneness of all

³⁴ 'மாதவம் செய்த தென்திசை வாழ்ந்திடத் தீதுஇலாத் திருத்தொண்டத் தொகை தரப் போதுவான் அவர்மேல் மணம் போக்கிடக் காதல் மாதரும் காட்சியில் கண்ணினார்' (பெ.பு. 35).

realities and a search through unified consciousness of all things (PP. 966)³⁵ in humble service (PP. 988)³⁶ and moral living (PP. 1037)³⁷. This study offers an interpretation and an understanding of that mysticism in the *Periya Purāṇam* which previously had received so little attention. Indeed by the very absence of such an academic study, this present exploration and research is a modest attempt to fill that gap.

The intention is to show that by drawing upon inspiration from the mystical footprints of the Tamil literary, devotional and moral tradition and using their literary characters, the *Periya Purāṇam* presents a distinctive mysticism, namely the efficacy of service and moral living. It is achieved by integrating the innate inclinations of human nature i.e. religious sentiments of devotion, wisdom, contemplation and action, interweaved around a profound theology of *Śiva* as a personal God of affection (PP. 2738)³⁸. It is through a theological insight of the human person and a theology of service and moral living, the *Periya Purāṇam* leads to an inner perfection and creates a space to

‘In the South ..., the impeccable ‘Catalogue of the Holy Servants of the Lord’ were given to the world’ (PP. 35).

³⁵ ‘இவ்வாறு நிற்பனவும் சரிப்பனவும் இசை மயமாய் மெய் வாழும் புலன் கரணம் மேவிய ஒன் றாயினவால் மொய்வாச நறுங் கொன்றை முடிச்சடையார் அடித்தொண்டர் செவ் வாயின் மிசை வைத்த திருக்குழல் வாசைன உருக்க’ (பெ.பு. 966).

‘As the servant of the Lord played the flute with true devotion, all mobile and immobile living beings with all their senses and faculties did melt by the music and merged into one single whole’ (PP. 966).

³⁶ ‘அந்தம் இலவாம் மிறை செய்யவும் அன்பனார்தாம் முந்தைம் முறைமைப் பணி முட்டலர் செய்து வந்தார் தம்மம் பெருமைக்கு அளவு ஆகிய சார்பில் நிற்கும் எம்தம் பெருமக்களை யாவர் தடுக்க வல்லார்’ (பெ.பு. 988).

‘In spite of all cruelties imposed on him by the King, the servant of the Lord continued his act of service without fault. Who can prevent our heroes from doing such a chosen path of service?’ (PP. 988).

³⁷ ‘வான் அளிப்பன மறையவர் வேள்வியின் வளர்தீ தேன் அளிப்பன நறுமலர் செறி செழுஞ்சோலை ஆன் அளிப்பன அஞ்ச உகந்து ஆடுவார்க்கு அவ்வூர் தான் அளிப்பன தருமமும் நீதியும் சால்பும்’ (பெ.பு. 1037).

‘In the presence of God, the people of the land performed their duties, pursued justice and practiced virtue.’ (PP. 1037).

³⁸ தோன்று காட்சி கடர் விட்டுள்ள என்பது ஆன்ற அங்கிப் புறத்து ஒளியாய் அன்பில் ஊன்ற உள்ளும் சோதியாய் நின்றனன் ஏன்று காண்பார்க்கு இதுபொருள் என்றதாம் (பெ.பு. 2738).

“He is radiant light” – to those who have eyes to see, this means that while his outward form is burning fire, he shines as the light within the hearts of those who love him (PP. 2738).

have that mystical oneness with *Śiva* in contemplative service and moral living. At the same time this leads one to be a mystic in the ordinariness of human living. *Cēkkiḷār's* ideal of service and moral living is not directed as a discipline to go beyond self but it exists intensely within one's self i.e. to acquire an inner perfection of one's personality and encourages one to strive for the fullness of being human.

The fundamental point for *Cēkkiḷār*, of any mystical experience however is service and moral living. It has in itself an intense ethical imperative to inform the immediacy of a life in service. The true mystic embodies a joyful and unified activity in real communion with life and the divinity; it is the origin and the foundation of all things. Its most eminent examples are revealed in the *nāyaṇmār* of the *Periya Purāṇam*. It is for this reason, the subject of the *Periya Purāṇam* primarily deals with love of *Śiva* of the *nāyaṇmār* and elucidates how they exemplified this love of *Śiva* through their act of service especially through their service to His devotees in their historic, social and religious settings. The *nāyaṇmār* were servitors of God *Śiva* and fellow devotees. In their daily encounter with divine and human they expresses devotion primarily serving their fellow devotee – a service done in a mystical state and through a right conduct of life or moral living. This is what the thesis seek to elucidate and contribute. The contention is that by returning to the *Periya Purāṇam's* mystical roots and by studying its mystical heritage and mysticism, Tamil *Śaivism* could draw attention to the *nāyaṇmār* as once who testified to all ages, to the ineffable love of *Śiva* and its munificence and magnitude.

1.3 Research Methodology

The purpose of this study is to introduce the mysticism of service and moral living of *nāyaṇmār* as found in the hagiographical narration of the *Periya Purāṇam*. Hence the method followed in this study can be said to be first hagiographical and apologetic. It is hagiographical for the reason that the *Periya Purāṇam* is an anthology of fundamentally diverse biographical narratives of the sixty-three *nāyaṇmār* in their historic, social and religious settings with the theme of service and moral living as the unifying factor. The life of each individual *nāyaṇmār* is given as a separate *Purāṇam*. In these narratives, each saint emerges with a distinct personality. *Cēkkiḷār* gives a graphic account of the religious experiences as well as their mystical experiences of the *nāyaṇmār*. The descriptions of the religious experiences of the *nāyaṇmār* are nothing but the interpretative accounts made by *Cēkkiḷār*. The *nāyaṇmār*'s delightful communion with *Śiva*, their incessant efforts to achieve that goal, estrangement from empirical phenomena, involvement in religious austerities, contemplating the Lord at every moment in service and in their moral living, interaction among the *nāyaṇmār*, and finally realization of *Śiva* as a sustaining factor are overwhelmingly illustrated by *Cēkkiḷār*³⁹. From these illustrations we can imbibe the inherent elements of mysticism on a par with the first hand experiences of the *nāyaṇmār*. This study tries to delineate these two ideals of service and moral living through the life of service and moral living of the *nāyaṇmār* as narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam*.

³⁹ For example, *Cēkkiḷār* notes:

‘அன்றினார் புரம் எரித்தார்க்கு ஆலயம் எடுக்க எண்ணி ஒன்றும் அங்கு உதவாதாக
ஊணர்வினால் எடுக்கும் தன்மை நன்று என மனத்தினாலே நல்ல ஆலயம் தான்செய்த
நின்ற ஊர்ப் பூசலார்தாம் நினைவினை உரைக்கல் உற்றாம்’ (பெ.பு. 4176).

‘I shall now relate what *Pūcalār* of *Niṇṇavūr* achieved by the employment of his mental faculties. He had wanted to build a temple for Lord *Śiva*, but taking the wherewithal, he decided that a temple built by means his spiritual awareness would serve as well. So that is what he did, and it turned out to be a very fine temple too’ (PP. 4176).

Secondly, it is apologetic because, the study is to bolster the claim that this mysticism that is embedded in the text i.e. *Periya Purāṇam* has been largely overlooked. Through an integral approach of hagiographical-apologetic and thematic exegesis, it is argued that *Cēkkiḷār*, the author, by imbuing himself in the mystical quest of the early Tamil literary, moral and devotional traditions, textured around these *nāyaṇmār*, initiates a way to *Śiva* that was foreign to the Tamil tradition of his milieu. *Cēkkiḷār* shapes his mystical theology and ideology in the form of two aims i.e. service and moral living. By his radical theology of *Siva*, he presents a theology of service and moral living which is ‘Person’ centred and a mystical thirst for *Siva* which is ‘Divine’ oriented. This interplay of cosmic and meta-cosmic levels of mystical experience provided a worldview, an alternative vision for political and social change in Tamil society. Hence, the method employed in this study can be said to be hagiographical and apologetic.

Thirdly, this study employs both a descriptive interpretation and thematic exegesis⁴⁰, in which the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* are an interpretive tool to unravel the mysticism of service and moral living and profound theological visions that are stated implicitly. In this sense, an attempt is made here to study the two recurring ‘themes’ of the *Periya Purāṇam* i.e. service and moral living which are the unifying factor of the *nāyaṇmār* as a community in the *Periya Purāṇam*. While doing so the study offers a critique by tracing the roots of *Cēkkiḷār*’s mystical ideology and relating it to the mystical

⁴⁰ Thematic exegesis is used to study the recurrent theme or the central idea of a particular text by analyzing images, clues and symbols so as to understand the insight of the text and of the author. Taylor and Bogdan note that in such a method ‘conversation topics, vocabulary, recurring activities, meanings, feelings, or folk sayings and proverbs’ (Taylor and Bogdan, 1989, p.131) are discussed by ‘bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which often are meaningless when viewed alone’ (Leininger, 1985, p. 60). The method is largely used in Part II and III of this study on the concept of service and morality in the *Periya Purāṇam*.

traditions of Tamil culture, ‘religious’ movements and the historical context that shaped and influenced his hagiographical narrative. This is to note that the *Periya Purāṇam* is a complex text which grew out different cultural and social context and that it has to be viewed within the context of the developing literary tradition, moral and devotional tradition of which it is a part. This allows one not only to know the world of the author and the text and the influence these traditions and religious ideals exerted on the formation of the text but it also permits a comprehensive presentation of *Cēkkiḷār’s* mystical ideology from a structural point of view. It should be noted that the intention here is not to approach the *Periya Purāṇam* as a work to be ‘deconstructed’ but to highlight that this sacred text is a dynamic and transformative text which shaped by an ideologicoical underpinning grew up with a definite ideology to reshape Tamil culture.

The use of such methodologies is based on the understanding that the *Periya Purāṇam* is not a systematic treatise on *Śaiva* philosophy or theology. It is a hagiographical narration that expresses its thoughts and messages in poetic stanzas through the lives of the *nāyaṇmār*. However, the poems contain in them a definite philosophy and theology. When the specific ‘vision’ or ‘worldview’ of the totality of reality has to be expressed in human language, difficulties are certainly encountered. Human language, which relates basically to the realms of ‘signs’ and ‘symbols’ as understood in semiotics, falls short of comprehending the totality of reality, which is ‘signified’. The language used in such matters to explain the experience of such an unfathomable reality cannot be ‘descriptive’ but ‘evocative’. Ordinary poetry often makes use of metaphor, similes, stories and other figures of speech to express a certain

‘mystical vision’ of reality which is too deep for words and is ineffable. Therefore, when a study of this nature is carried out to articulate in clear terms, the mystical vision of the *Periya Purāṇam* and the power of its symbolism, another difficulty is encountered; it is the hermeneutical difficulty of trying to read the mind, as it were of another, and of a comprehension of a text written in an entirely different historical and socio-cultural milieu. By paying attention to the problematic nature of religious language, as symbolic and evocative, and by paying attention to this complex hagiographical text which offers mysticism which has been largely been overlooked, the combined approach of hagiographical-apologetic and with thematic exegesis is used.

1.4 Challenges and Limitations

This study is limited to the subject of the ideals of service and moral living as delineated in the *Periya Purāṇam*. A serious research of this nature is bound to have certain limitations.

First of all, all the translations of the verses in the *Periya Purāṇam* made in this study are mine. Translating such a complex yet a dynamic text in prose style accurately especially certain technical terms and phrases into English in a manner that does not lose the original richness of meaning is a challenge. Secondly, though the *Periya Purāṇam* is venerated in Tamil *Śaiva* tradition as a significant religious text, there is a dearth of research studies in English and in Tamil on the *Periya Purāṇam* and specially on the subject of mysticism of *Periya Purāṇam*. It limits one to critically engage with other researches. However, the concern here is primarily to engage with the *Periya Purāṇam*

which contains such a rich material resource on the ideal of service and moral living of the *nāyaṇmār*. Thirdly, as already indicated, most of the published material available in either Tamil or English seems to be more for religious propaganda and for literary purposes rather than theological purposes.

As for the method of citing quotations from and reference to source materials, the University of Birmingham School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion postgraduate student handbook 2010-2011 recommends that the version of the Harvard system of referencing and bibliography is used, to present a standardized writing style. However, when the hymns of the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Tolkāpiyam* (தொல்காப்பியம்), *Tirukkūṟul* (திருக்குறள்), *Tēvāram* (தேவாரம்) and similar original texts are referred to, the number of parenthesis are the numbers of these hymns and texts and not the author, year and page numbers. The first time such references are made, the explanatory note indicates the full detail regarding the reference of the hymns or texts, and this is found in the list of references preceding the bibliography.

1.5 Outline of the Structure of the Thesis

The study is divided into three parts:

The first part focuses its attention on the roots of the ideal of service and moral living of the *nāyaṇmār* in *Periya Purāṇam* and attempt is made to place the *Periya Purāṇam* in its literary, religious, historical and socio-cultural context. It is necessary to understand not only the context that gave birth to the *Periya Purāṇam* but it is also necessary to understand its originality within the context. No text can be understood

without its given ‘context’ – including Tamil literary, moral, devotional traditions, literary characters, conventions, philosophy and theologies; these in the case of the *Periya Purāṇam* are found in the lives of the holy *nāyaṇmār*, and particularly the Tamil *Śaivite* milieu.

The first chapter of this first part, therefore, examines the mystical quest in early Tamil literature. It underlines the fact that the *Periya Purāṇam* drew on original sources from Tamil literary, cultural and religious tradition from classical texts to articulate its ideal of service and moral living. This chapter provides evidence to show how the aspiration of early Tamils to have communion with the ‘sacred power’ in *Caṅkam* literature, the moral integrity as that is exemplified by the ethical treatise *Tirukkural*, and the devotional ethos of *Tirumuṟai* played an important role in shaping the ideal of service and morality in the *Periya Purāṇam*.

The second chapter addresses the mysticism of the prominent *nāyaṇmār* of Tamil *Śaivism*. The chapter affirms that *Cēkkiḷār* drew inspiration from the mysticism of these saints upon which he was able to base and formulate his own vision of the ideal of service and moral living. *Cēkkiḷār* was a product of his own tradition; he followed the path i.e. the affective mysticism established by the early Tamil *nāyaṇmār* and considered them as mystic giants on whose shoulders he stood.

The third chapter focuses on an inquiry into the socio-cultural or the historical context that influenced the creation of the *Periya Purāṇam*. It affirms that the *Periya*

Purāṇam is more than a hagiography. It seems to raise critical questions about Tamil society that articulated a holistic insight into life and provide an ideology that will enable Tamil society to adapt to emerging circumstances that began to define Tamil culture and identity. As a text's vision is always better observed in the light of events, certain significant facts are singled out for consideration. Then, following a treatment of the impact of the socio-cultural issues in the *Periya Purāṇam*, the investigation moves to its second part, aimed at reconstructing the theological vision of *Cēkḱilār*.

The second part presents *Cēkḱilār*'s theological 'vision' of reality. This second part is divided into two chapters. The first chapter examines *Cēkḱilār*'s unique theological vision. Specifically, his vision of *Śiva*. *Cēkḱilār* shapes this image of *Śiva* by selectively drawing upon and integrating the myths and doctrines found in the Tamil tradition as well as pan-Indian myths. It is this vision of the *Śiva* that proved pivotal to his ideal of service and morality. The second chapter will focus on the goal of the *nāyaṇmār* as presented in the *Periya Purāṇam* i.e. the ultimate goal of their existence. The goal of the *nāyaṇmār* was to gain release from encumbrances of the impurities and to be a servant to the servant of the *Śiva* (PP. 345)⁴¹.

In the third part, an attempt is made at an analysis of the *Periya Purāṇam*'s ideal of service and moral living. It is here, as previously mentioned, that this study finds even greater justification. The first chapter highlights the *Periya Purāṇam*'s unique idea of service. It explores the various facets of the theology of service as presented in the *Periya Purāṇam*. It affirms this fundamental ideal of life which must be the basis of all genuine

⁴¹ '...தில்லைவாழ் அந்தணர்தம் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்' (பெ.பு. 345).

mystical and religious experiences. Indeed, to be in *Śiva* is to live in service – *Śiva*'s service. The second chapter attempts to analyse the *Periya Purāṇam*'s ideal of moral living. This is to emphasise that the *nāyaṇmār*'s mysticism cannot be separated from their influence in the moral dimension of life. It shows that the interface of the mystical experience and of moral living is a significant contribution of *Cēkkiḷār*.

At the conclusion, the issue of uniqueness of such ideal of service and moral living is discussed in detail, namely the originality of such a discourse and its contemporary relevance. It is here that *Cēkkiḷār*'s prophetic ideal of service and moral living not only responds to the needs of contemporary society but it also inspires brings religiosity to Tamil *Śaivism*. Finally, certain other recommended areas are opened up for further academic study and research in the future.

PART I

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND THE ROOTS OF THE MYSTICISM
OF THE *PERIYA PURĀṆAM*

CHAPTER TWO

THE MYSTICAL QUEST IN EARLY TAMIL LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The *Periya Purāṇam* (பெரிய புராணம்) in the Tamil tradition is seen as a divinely inspired devotional text. Legend has it that *Śiva* himself directed *Cēkkiḷār* (சேக்கிழார்) to begin his work on the heroic lives of the *nāyaṇmār* (நாயன்மார்) by declaring the first word of the first stanza of the *Periya Purāṇam* as ‘*ulahelām*’ (உலகெலாம்), meaning ‘all the worlds’ (PP. 1).⁴² The author, *Cēkkiḷār*, himself attests to the fact that he heard a divine voice urging him to compose the hymns honouring the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* (நாயன்மார்) or the ‘Holy Servants of the Lord’ (PP. 9).⁴³ Hence, a divine purpose guided the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam* and it ultimately originates from *Śiva*. As an inspired work on the lives of the *Śaivite* saints, it recollects the manifestations of life of

⁴² உலகெலாம் உணர்ந்து ஓதற்கு அரியவன்
நிலவு உலாவிய நீர்மலி வேணியன்
அலகுஇல் சோதியன் அம்பலத்து ஆடுவான்
மலர்சிவம்பு அடி வாழ்த்தி வணங்குவாம் (பெ.பு. 1).

‘In all the worlds, no one can comprehend or tell of his greatness. In his matted hair he holds the river Ganges and the crescent moon. He shines the brightest of all heavenly lights, and dances in the sacred court. His are the flower feet, circled with anklets, which we worship and adore’ (PP. 1).

It must be noted that *Cēkkiḷār* obediently both began and closes this account on the lives of the holy servants with the same divine epithet ‘*ulahelām*’ (உலகெலாம்: ‘all the words’) striking the chord of everlasting remembrance of these *Śaivite* saints.

என்றும் இன்பம் பெருகும் இயல்பினால்
ஒன்று காதலித்து உள்ளமும் ஓங்கிட
மற்று உளார் அடியார் அவர்வான்புகழ்
நின்றுது எங்கும் நிலவி உலகெலாம் (பெ.பு. 4286).

‘As their bliss grows ever more intense, with hearts inspired they love the only Lord so the celestial glory of the servants of the Lord, who dwells in the golden court, everywhere abides throughout all the worlds’ (PP. 4286).

⁴³ அருளின் நீர்மைத் திருத்தொண்டு அறிவரும்
தெருளில் நீர்து செப்புதற்கு ஆம் எனின்
வெருளில் மெய்மொழி வான்நிழல் கூறிய
பொருளின் ஆகும் எனப்புகல்வாம் அன்றே (பெ.பு. 9)

‘The holy service of the Lord, which is my subject, is inspired by grace and lies beyond man’s power to comprehend. So, one might ask, since I can boast no special wisdom, what right have I to tell of it? This would be the answer I give: an unerring voice from heaven spoke to instruct me’ (PP. 9). *Cēkkiḷār*, the human author, guided by divine assistance, wrote the hagiography which the Lord *Śiva* wanted written.

devotion in service (*Toṇṭu*: தொண்டு) and of the moral living (நன்னெறி: *nanneri*) of the *nāyaṇmār*, how they expressed themselves, and how they responded to the *Śiva*-experience that remembered and interpreted their devotional experience in daily living. In the historical context, the *Periya Purāṇam* written under the support of the royal patronage (PP. 8)⁴⁴ drew upon original sources from Tamil literary, cultural and religious tradition.

It is imperative, therefore, to research the literary history to which the *Periya Purāṇam* is an heir. Such a research will allow an investigation of the motives of the author and demonstrate how literary antecedents were used to form a devotional literature to address a particular crisis of the *Cōḷa* period under the King *Kulōttunga II* [(குலோத்துங்க) (1133-1150 A.C.E)].⁴⁵ In fact *Cēkkiḷār* himself acknowledges his engagement with the literary sources and their values in the composition of the *Periya*

⁴⁴ மேய இவ்வரை கொண்டு விரும்புமாம்
சேயவன் திருப்பேரம்பலம் செய்ய
தூயபொன் அணி சோழன் நீடு ஊழிபார்
ஆயசீர் அநபாயன் அரசவை (பெ.பு. 8).

‘The *Cōḷa* king, *Anapāyaṇ*, won eternal fame by enhancing the holy court of the Lord with pure gold. Now, it is stated, his royal court wishes to receive this book’ (PP. 8).

It is noticeable here that *Cēkkiḷār* places the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam* during the reign of the *Cōḷa* king, *Anapāya*, who receives adulatory mention again in several places in the narrative. In various places in the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkkiḷār* makes reference to king *Anapāyaṇ* as his patron (PP. 8, 22, 85, 98, 404, 552, 1218, 2750, 3954, 4215). For example in the verse 85 *Cēkkiḷār* notes ‘... பொன்தடந் தோளால் வையம் பொதுக் கடிந்து இனிது காக்கும் கொற்றவன் அநபாயன்..’ (பெ. பு. 85) [(‘... Claiming the whole world for himself, king *Anapāyaṇ* rules with strong arm ...’ (PP. 85)]. *Cēkkiḷār* also refers to his king by other names such as *Cenṇi Anapāyaṇ* and *Kulōttuṅga Cōḷaṇ* (PP. 1218) [(‘சென்னி அபயன் குலோத்துங்கச் சோழன் தில்லைத் திருஎல்லை...’ (பெ.பு.1218)]. This has caused considerable debate among scholars as to the exact identity of *Anapāyaṇ*. Nonetheless, it is generally accepted that *Anapāyaṇ*, the royal patron of *Cēkkiḷār* is none other than king *Kulōttuṅga II* (1133 A.C.E -1150 A.C.E) (Subramanian K. R., 2002, p. 74; Zvelebil, 1975, pp. 179-180). It is he when hearing the lives and works of these *Śaiva* saints assured his support to *Cēkkiḷār* to collect and publish in writing the heroic lives of these holy men and women. When the *Periya Purāṇam* was completed the king and the high priests of the temple assembled and listened to the exposition of the whole epic. The king was greatly impressed by the work and conferred on *Cēkkiḷār* the tile ‘தொண்டர் சீர் பரவுவார்’ (the panegyrist of devotees). The *Periya Purāṇam* was taken around the temple over the king’s royal elephant with *Cēkkiḷār* also on the ride.

⁴⁵ For the particular historical crisis of the period, see Chapter 4.

Purāṇam (PP. 48).⁴⁶ This chapter therefore, will explore, examine and demonstrate the influence of the preceding Tamil classical texts in the creation of the *Periya Purāṇam*.

The chapter is divided into three parts:

2.2 The Mystical Quest and the Literary Character of the *Caṅkam* poetry

2.3 The Mystical Quest and the Moral Discourses of the *Tirukkural*

2.4 The Mystical Quest and the Devotional Culture of the *Tirumurai*

2.5 Summary

2.2 The Mystical Quest and the Literary Character of the *Caṅkam* poetry

The fundamental aspects of *nāyaṇmār's* devotional service and moral living as narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam* are to be found in Tamil literary antiquity i.e. *cāṇṟōr ceyyul* (சான்றோர் செய்யல்) known as *Caṅkam* (சங்கம்)⁴⁷ corpus. *Caṅkam* literature, as Zvelebil

⁴⁶ மற்று இதற்குப் பதிகம் வந்தொண்டர்தாம்
புற்றிடத்துளம் புராணர் அருளினால்
சொற்ற மெய்த்திருத் தொண்டத் தொகைஎனப்
பெற்ற நற்பதிகம் தொழப் பெற்றதாம் (பெ.பு. 48).

‘As the source of this narrative, I use the revered poem called “The Catalogue of the Holy Servants of the Lord”, which *Vaṇṭoṇṭar* himself composed with the aid of divine guidance’ (PP. 48).

⁴⁷ These are assemblies which flourished in the Tamil environment across the period between 150 B.C.E to 600 A.C.E. These assemblies composed of poets from various strata of Tamil society gave birth to Tamil classical literature which came to be known as *Caṅkam* literature. There exists a considerable debate on the origin of the term *Caṅkam*, the assemblies and the timeline history of Tamil literature. According to Zvelebil the term *Caṅkam* appeared first in *Appar's Tirupattur Tandakam* (திருப்பத்துார் தாண்டகம்) which notes ‘look at him who was gracious enough to appear in the assembly (*Caṅkam*) as a poet of fine poems and presented the purse of gold of *Tarumi*’ (1973, p. 45). Zvelebil classifies the Tamil literary history into:

Pre-devotional

- i. The ‘bardic’ collection: (150 B.C.E – ca. 250 A.C.E)
- ii. Post-classical period: (ca. 250 A.C.E – 600 A.C.E)

Devotional and Post-devotional

- iii. Devotional texts: (ca. 600 A.C.E – 900 A.C.E)

Medieval

- iv. Early Period: (ca. 900 A.C.E -1200/1400 A.C.E)
- v. Later Period: (ca. 1200 A.C.E – 1750 A.C.E)

Modern Literature

- vi. Pre-modern: (ca. 1750 A.C.E – 1900 A.C.E)
- vii. Modern and Contemporary: 1900 A.C.E – 1980 A.C.E) (1992, p. 17).

However, the pre-devotional period as noted by Zvelebil postulated the following *Caṅkam* periods:

- i. Early-*Caṅkam* era: (150 B.C.E – ca. 250 A.C.E)

observes, is ‘a model unto itself - it is absolutely unique in the sense that, in subject-matter, thought-content, language and form, it is entirely and fully indigenous, that is, Tamil’ (1973, p.4). Hence, *Caṅkam* literature represents the most ancient, indigenous but ingenious form of literature, apart from Sanskrit to appear in India. Though such assertions are debated by scholars such as Nilakanta Sastri who emphasised that *Caṅkam* literature ‘is the unmistakable result of the blend of two originally distinct cultures, best described as Tamilian and the Aryan’ (1966, p. 129) and by Burton Stein who points to the fact of *Sanskritic* influence on *Caṅkam* literature (1980, p. 51) ‘the significance of the early Tamil poetry for the Tamil literature of later periods is enormous (Dubianski, 2000, p. xii). As emphasized by Dubianski

‘Its ideas were later modified to be adopted by the *bhakta* [devotional] poets and strongly influenced the specific character of the devotional *bhakti* poetry. Thus, there are reasons to view ancient Tamil poetry as a cornerstone of Tamil verbal culture in general’ (2000, p. xii).

Although the influence of these ancient literature and its literary conventions did not govern the entire composition of the *Periya Purāṇam*, nonetheless its influence and *Cēkkiḷār*’s reference to it is discernible in the *Periya Purāṇam*. In several places *Cēkkiḷār* makes references to these *Caṅkam* assemblies (PP. 977)⁴⁸ and emphasis that it was *Śiva* who presided over this academy of Tamil and expounded the true meaning of the Tamil

ii. Post-*Caṅkam* era: (ca. 250 A.C.E – 600 A.C.E)

The true existence of these *Caṅkam* or assemblies is debated among the scholars. It is now accepted by some Tamil scholars that this legend i.e. the existence of these assemblies is a reference to the codification of *Caṅkam* poetry. For Kailasapathy, that an assembly of Tamil poets that existed under the royal patronage in Madurai, is credited for the collection and compilation of earlier *Caṅkam* corpus. See David C. Buck and K. Paramasivam, 1997, pp. 4-6; George Hart III, 1975, pp. 9-10; Kamil Zvelebil, 1975, p. 60; K. Kailasapathy, 1968, p. 3.

⁴⁸ ‘... முதுர் நூல்பாய் இடத்தும் உள நோன்தலை மேதி பாயப்

பால்பாய் முலைதோய் மதுப்பங்கயம் பாய் எங்கும்

சேல்பாய் தடத்தும் உள செய்யுள் மிக்கு ஏறுசங்கம்’ (பெ.பு. 977).

‘...Madurai, the home of the academies where poets read their works and where the three branches of Tamil culture flourished in the schools...’ (PP. 977).

texts (PP. 1673)⁴⁹. By this *Cēkkiḷār* seems to suggest not only the divinity of Tamil language by linking it to *Śiva* but also makes considerable effort to relate the *Periya Purāṇam* to the Tamil tradition. The pan-Indian deity *Śiva* is portrayed as the guardian of the Tamil language. In the introduction to his narration *Cēkkiḷār* implores *Śiva* to ‘... grant us the honour of telling the great story in sweet Tamil’ (PP. 3),⁵⁰ which is also adored as ‘pure Tamil’ (‘செந்தமிழ்’ : *centtamiḷ*) (PP. 260)⁵¹, ‘divine Tamil’ (‘தெய்வத் தமிழ்’ : *daivattamiḷ*) (PP. 975),⁵² ‘immortal Tamil’ (‘அசைதல் இல்லாத செழுந்தமிழ்’ : *asaital illāthe celuntamiḷ*) (PP. 1927),⁵³ and ‘three kinds of Tamil’ (‘மும்மைத் தமிழ்’ : *mummaittamiḷ*) (PP. 2816)⁵⁴. Furthermore, *Cēkkiḷār* refers to the devotional songs of *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* as ‘garland of Tamil praise’ (‘தமிழ்மலர் மாலை’ : *tamiḷmalar mālai*) (PP. 2435)⁵⁵ asserting his affection for the Tamil language and of *nāyaṇmār*’s Tamilness. This shows not only the adoration that *Cēkkiḷār* pays to Tamil

⁴⁹ ‘சென்று அணைந்து மதுரையினில் திருந்திய நூல் சங்கத்துள்
அன்று இருந்து தமிழ் ஆராய்ந்து அருளிய ...’ (பெ.பு. 1673).

‘He moved in and came to the shrine of the Lord, who presided over the Academy of Tamil...’ (PP. 1673).

⁵⁰ ‘... எடுக்கும் மாக்கதை இன்தமிழ்ச் செய்யுளாய்
நடக்கும் மேன்மை நமக்கு அருள் செய்திடத் ...’ (பெ.பு. 3).

‘... May he grant to us the honour of telling this story in sweet Tamil verse’ (PP. 3).

⁵¹ ‘... திருக்கோலக் கா இறைஞ்சிச்
செந்தமிழ் மாலைகள் பாடி’ (பெ.பு. 260).

‘...he offered worship singing garlands of pure Tamil’ (PP. 260).

The earliest usage of the term *centtamiḷ* (‘செந்தமிழ்’) is traced to *Tolkāppiyam*. It is the “standard, ‘correct’, ‘polished’ language sanctioned by the norm of *ilakkaṇam* (இலக்கணம்) and used in *ilakkiyam* (இலக்கியம்) as the linguistic vehicle of high literary culture... in contrast to *koṭunttamiḷ*. lit. ‘crooked’ (in contrast to ‘straight’) language, the unpolished, non-standard, non-literary language obviously exhibiting features of regional/local (horizontal) and social (vertical) dialects” (Zvelebil, 1992, p. 135).

⁵² ‘... ஞாலம் அளந்த மேன்மைத்
தெய்வத் தமிழும் தரும் செவ்வி மணம் செய் ஈரம்’ (பெ.பு. 975).

‘... there divine Tamil whose glory spans the world nurtured the fragrance of kindness and beauty’ (PP. 975).

⁵³ ‘... அசைவுஇல் செழுமதமிழ்வுழக்கே அயல்வழக்கின் துறைவெல்ல’ (பெ.பு. 1927).

‘... the cause of immortal Tamil triumphed over all other tongues ...’ (PP. 1927).

⁵⁴ ‘... வேதபாரகன் மும்மைத் தமிழ்வேந்தன்...’ (பெ.பு. 2816).

‘... master of the three kinds of Tamil...’ (PP. 2816).

The three kinds of Tamil are *iyal* (இயல்: ‘natural’ Tamil i.e. prose or poetry), *icai* (இசை: musical Tamil, song) and *nāṭakam* (நாடகம்: dramatic Tamil).

⁵⁵ ‘மருவு வாய்மழமவண் தமிழ்மலர் மாலை அவ்
வயவணைச் சிறப்பித்துப்...’ (பெ.பு. 2435)

‘He sang the hymn ... with a garland of Tamil praise’ (PP. 2435).

language and of his veneration of *Caṅkam* classics but emphasised the fact that the influence of early classical literature on the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam* cannot be totally dismissed.

Historically, the early *Caṅkam* (150 B.C.E – ca. 400 A.C.E)⁵⁶ was based on an age of wonder and scepticism for Tamil society which was slowly emerging from its megalithic tribal culture. It adapted and evolved to a more civilized feudal system, *nāṭu* (நாடு) or state, as agricultural, pastoral and egalitarian societies, with chieftain-kings (*kurunila mannarkal*: குருநில-மன்னர்கள்) who ruled Tamil dynasties: *Cēra* (சேரர்) (ca. 5th century B.C.E -1102 A.C.E), *Cōḷa* (சோழர்) (ca. 300 B.C.E – 1279 A.C.E) and *Pāṇṭyars* (பாண்டியர்) (ca. 550 B.C.E – 1250 A.C.E). It was during this period of a ‘widening sphere of social interaction’ (Ludden, 1985, pp. 3-15) and cultural fusion⁵⁷; the celebrated mystical songs of these native bards (*porunar*: பொருனர்) and wandering minstrels (*pāṇar* : பாணர்), their imageries of the human conditions of Tamil society and their vision of life which later influenced the writing of the *Periya Purāṇam* were transformed into a lyric

⁵⁶ Tamil scholars have assigned various chronological levels to the *Caṅkam* corpus. For example, Hardy is of the opinion there are four chronological strata in *Caṅkam* poetry. Hardy believes that the classical *Caṅkam* poetry should be dated to the period from the first century to the sixth century B.C.E. However, he assigns a much later date i.e. 5th to 7th centuries to works such as *Paripāṭal* (பரிபாடல்) and *Kalittokai* (கலித்தொகை) in the *Caṅkam* poetry. Tieken places the *Caṅkam* corpus between the 9th or 10th century after the Common Era. The dating of *Caṅkam* poetry is beyond the scope of the thesis. The thesis follows the chronology of the *Caṅkam* poetry as suggested by Zvelebil. See Hardy, 1983, p. 125; Tieken, 2001, p. 235; Zvelebil, 1975, p. 107.

⁵⁷ Hardy is of the opinion that there is clear evidence of the influence of pan-Indian religious ideologies, Brahmanical religion, Buddhism and Jainism. However, for him, *Caṅkam* literature contains elements which are unique to Tamil culture (1983, p. 120-121). Nonetheless, one could agree with Dubianski points to the fact that the Tamil worldview as presented in the *Caṅkam* poetry is unique and remains largely unaffected by external influence (2000, p.4). Though allusion has been made to the influence of pan-Indian religious ideologies, there are no clear references to them in the *Caṅkam* literature.

poetry; texts such as *Eṭṭuttokai* (எட்டுத்தொகை) or Eight Anthologies⁵⁸ and *Pattuppāṭṭu* (பத்துப்பாட்டு) or Ten Idylls⁵⁹ (Wilden, 2006, p.4) aimed to construct a Tamil identity.

These bards, messengers or ‘servitor[s] of the state’⁶⁰ whose life and service set precedence to the devotional life of service and moral living of the *nāyaṇmār* presented in the *Periya Purāṇam*, were considered as having an intuitive perception of the creative, yet ‘impersonal, anonymous power, an awe-inspiring supernatural force inherent in a number of phenomena but not identified or confused with any one of them in particular’ i.e. *aṇaṇku* (அணங்கு)⁶¹ (Zvelebil, 1986, p.190). It was their belief that the specific

⁵⁸ The eight anthologies and the subjects that they dealt with are:

i.	<i>Aiṅkuṇūru</i>	(ஐங்குருநூறு)	-	Courtship and love
ii.	<i>Akanānūru</i>	(அகநானூறு)	-	Love and separation
iii.	<i>Puranānūru</i>	(புறநானூறு)	-	Political and social life
iv.	<i>Kaliṭṭhokai</i>	(கலித்தொகை)	-	Nuances of love experience
v.	<i>Kurunthokai</i>	(குறுந்தொகை)	-	Love and separation
vi.	<i>Natṛinai</i>	(நற்றிணை)	-	Tamil landscape
vii.	<i>Paripaṭal</i>	(பரிபாடல்)	-	Goals of Tamil land
viii.	<i>Pathituppaththu</i>	(பதிற்றுப்பத்து)	-	Glorification of the <i>Cēra</i> king

⁵⁹ The ten idylls and the subjects they dealt with are:

i.	<i>Tirumurukāruppaṭai</i>	(திருமுருகாற்றுப்படை)	-	Greatness of the Lord <i>Muruga</i> and His dwelling
ii.	<i>Kuṛiṇcippāṭṭu</i>	(குறிஞ்சிப்பாட்டு)	-	Splendour of <i>Kuṛiṇci</i> land
iii.	<i>Malipaṭukatām</i>	(மலைபடுகடாம்)	-	Eulogy of chieftain <i>Naṇan venmān</i>
iv.	<i>Maturaikkāñci</i>	(மதுரைக் காஞ்சி)	-	Glorification of the king
	<i>Neduncheliyan</i>			
v.	<i>Maullaippāṭṭu</i>	(முல்லைப்பாட்டு)	-	Love poems
vi.	<i>Netunalvātai</i>	(நெடுநல்வாடை)	-	Love, landscape and praise of the king <i>Neduncheliyan</i>
vii.	<i>Paṭṭiṇppālai</i>	(பட்டினப்பாலை)	-	Love and praise of kings
viii.	<i>Perumpāṇār uppaṭai</i>	(பெரும்பாணாற்றுப்படை)	-	Applauds the benevolence of <i>Tondaiman Ilandiraiyan</i>
ix.	<i>Poruṇarāu uppaṭai</i>	(பொருநராற்றுப்படை)	-	Glorifies the <i>Cōla</i> king <i>Karikala</i>
x.	<i>Cirupāṇār uppaṭai</i>	(சிறுபாணாற்றுப்படை)	-	Tribute to the chieftain <i>Nalliyakkotan</i>

⁶⁰ To understand the different service and functions these bards performed, see Kersenboom-Story, 1987, pp. 3-15.

⁶¹ This concept of *aṇaṇku* is considered as central to the study of *Caṅkam* poetry (Hart G.L., 1973, p. 233). V.S. Rajam who has studied this concept considers it to be ‘an anxiety producing source/agent’ (1986, p. 261). The word is highly ambiguous. The Tamil Lexicon of the University of Madras gives different meaning to this term *aṇaṇku*. The term could be understood to mean pain, disease, fear, lust, killing, deity, celestial damsel, devil, dance performed under religious excitement, low-caste person, beauty, young offspring.

qualities of *aṇaṇku* inheres in cosmic realities; they are discernible in specific qualities of human beings (Kur. 70)⁶², in parts of human body (Aka. 177:19)⁶³, in person's actions or special qualities (Nar. 386)⁶⁴, in animals (kuṟu. 308:2)⁶⁵ and in god *Murukaṇ* (முருகன்)⁶⁶ (Pur. 299:6)⁶⁷.

The reference to *aṇaṇku* as one of the qualities manifested by *Murukaṇ* or inhabits in *Murukaṇ* in *Caṅkam* literature is quite significant. He can cause as well as dispel *aṇaṇku* (Kur. 362)⁶⁸. In the classical Tamil literature *Murukaṇ* is presented as a

⁶² 'ஒடுங்கு ஈர் ஓதி ஓள் நுதல் குறுமகள்
நறும் தண் நீரள் அணங்கினளே
இனையள் என்று அவள் புனை அளவு அறியேன்
சில மெல்லியவே கிளவி
ஆணை மெல்லியள் யான் முயங்கும் காலே (குறு. 70).

'It is difficult to describe with words the qualities of the fragrant, cool young girl with wet hair and bright forehead. She is of few words and as soft as quilt when I embrace her' (Kur. 70). Here *aṇaṇku* is spoken as a person who caused love.

⁶³ '... அணங்குடை வன முலைத் தாஅய நின்...' (அக. 177:19).

Here *aṇaṇku* is presented as manifesting the breast of women. In *Patirruppattu* (பதிற்றுப்பத்து) it is depicted as manifesting in scary hands of the kings '... அணங்குடைத் தடக் கையர தோட்டி செப்பி...' (பதிற் 62:11). '... scary ones with big hands ...' (Pati. 62:11). 'A Tamil king is very much alive, too: a character who represents the sacred force directly and personally. He somehow embodies this sacred force, personifies it thus becoming an active participant in the ritual, for example, by performing a victory dance with his warriors' (Hart III, 1975, p. 12).

⁶⁴ '... அணங்குடை அருஞ் சூள் தருகுவென் என நீ,
நும்மோர் அன்னோர் துன்னார்...'

Here *aṇaṇku* is presented as manifested in the hero's action causing distress i.e. hero's false promise to many women.

⁶⁵ '... அணங்குடை அருந்தலை நீவலின் மதனழிந்து...' (குறுந் 308:2).

Here *aṇaṇku* is presented as manifesting in elephants head.

⁶⁶ The *Murukaṇ* of this period is associated with the hills and hill people. It is this peculiarly Tamil deity was later in the Tamil tradition became assimilated with *Skanda* – *Śiva*'s son. Though *Caṅkam* classics mention gods, it does not focus on them. Prentiss notes 'the gods are part of a constellation of characteristics that signify particular landscapes' (1999, p.54). For example, *Murukaṇ* is identified with mountain region, *Tirumal* with pastoral region, *Vētan* for agricultural region; *Varuṇaṇ* for littoral regions; the goddess *Koṟṟavai* was associated with the desert. The perception of the 'sacred power' and its presence in the world is fundamental element in *Caṅkam* classics religiosity.

⁶⁷ '... அணங்குடை முருகன் கோட்டத்துக்...' (புற. 299: 6).

'... who have entered the temple of avenging Murugan...' (Pur. 299. 6).

⁶⁸ '...யாம் இரப்பவை பொருளும் பொன்னும் போகமுடம் அல்ல: நின்பால்

அருளும், அன்பும், அறனும், மூன்றும் - உருள் இணர்க் கடம்பின் ஒலி தாரோயே' (பரி. 5: 80-81)

'We implore thee not for boons of enjoyment or wealth, but for thy benevolence of beatific, love and virtuous deeds' (Pari. 5:80-81).

'... நறுநுதல் நீவி வணங்கினை கொடுத்தி யாயின் அணங்கிய

wise man (*cāṇṛōṇ*: சான்றோன்)⁶⁹ and a headman or warrior hero *talaivaṇ* (தலைவன்) who possess qualities such as youth, beauty and love (Pari. 5:80-81, Pur. 16)⁷⁰. This implies that *Murukaṇ* was considered as the best of men who personifies the *Caṅkam* Tamil ideal of *kaḷavu maṇan* (கலவு மன்னன்: premarital union); he is a lover and possessor of beautiful girls (Pari. 9)⁷¹. When young maids fall ill i.e. when they are in love-sickness or to obtain the men of their choices or to gain the beauty of motherhood women had recourse to *Murukaṇ* (Kur. 111:1-4)⁷² often in the form of dance called *veriyāṭṭu* (வெறியாட்டு) (Subrahmanian, N. 1976, p. 13) or ‘*Vēlanāḍal* [வெலனாடல்] an ecstatic dance by a priest possessed by *vēlan* (வேலன்)’ i.e. *Murukaṇ* (Nilakanta Sastri, 1966, p22).⁷³

However, *Murukaṇ* was only a ‘divine’ type of human lover (Nar. 82:4-10)⁷⁴ who is depicted as ‘Lord of the hill’ (மலைகிழவோன்)⁷⁵ (Kur. 1) who ‘grants spiritual favours

விண்தோய் மாமலைச் சிலம்பன் ...’ (குறு. 362)

‘You pray and offer all this to powerful *Murukaṇ* (Kur. 362)

⁶⁹ The term *cāṇṛōṇ* (சான்றோன்) which originally used to refer to heroes was later in the medieval Tamil community was identified with learned people. The poets of the *Caṅkam* classics are called *cāṇṛōṇ* (சான்றோர்). See Kailasapathy, 1968, pp. 229-230.

⁷⁰ ‘...புலவாவான் புலர் சாந்தின் முருகன் சீற்றத்து உருகெழு குருசில்!’ (புற. 16)

‘...You are like god Murugan in your anger and appearance’ (Pur. 16).

⁷¹ The *Paripāṭal* 9 verses speak of his marriage with Valli as superior to his marriage with Devasenā.

⁷² ‘மென்தோன் நெகிழ்த்த செல்லல் வேலன்
வென்றி நெடுவேனல் என்னும் அன்னையும்
அதுவேன உணரும் ஆயின்...’ (குறு. 111:1-4).

‘Mother believes the soothsayer who says that you of delicate, weary shoulders, and in pain, are possessed by the victorious’ *Murukaṇ* (Kur. 111:1-4).

⁷³ In *Paṭṭiṇappalai* the women are depicted as dancing *veriyāṭṭu*.

‘வெறியாடு மகளிரோடு செறியத் தாஅய்க்’ (பத்தி. 155).

⁷⁴ ‘... முருகு புணர்ந்து இயன்ற வள்ளி போல, நின் உருவு கண் எறிப்ப நோக்கல் ஆற்றலெனே...’ (நற். 82: 4-5).

‘...as *Vāli* who loved *Murukan* and went away with him, ... the brilliance of your form shines in your eyes and that is why I cannot look at you’ (Nar. 82: 4-5).

⁷⁵ ‘... அன்னமேனி திகழ் ஒளி
குன்றி ஏய்க்கும் உடுக்கை குன்றின்
நெஞ்சு பக எறிந்த அம் சுடர் நெடுவேல்...’ (குறு. 1).

‘... He who wears the anklet of the brave Lord Muruga his hill takes on a red hue...’ (Kur. 1).

out of love’ as depicted in *Tirumurukārruppātai* (திருமுருகாற்றுப்படை) (Tirum. 94)⁷⁶. *Tirumurukārruppātai* and *Paripāṭal* (பரிபாடல்) are two prominent works of *Caṅkam* classics which speaks about *Murukaṇ*. Though the idea of a distant God is absent in them, these poems are the first intensely devotional poetry dedicated to a deity in Tamil literature. They are recognized as ‘the earliest testimony of the *bhakti* movement in south India’ (Zvelebil, 1981, p.101).

Subbiah observes that the reference to *Murukaṇ* (முருகன்) in these works as *talaivaṇ* (தலைவன்) i.e. leader in *Caṅkam* literature is quite significant that it is a ‘point of convergence that enabled the Tamils to identify and define the intersecting dimensions of the divine and the human....it was [and is] a notion that remained the bedrock for expressing the experiential relationship with the “other” in Tamil culture’ (1991, p.111). It reflects the deep religious belief that dimension of humanity and divinity are interwoven in the early *Caṅkam* Tamils. In fact, *Cēkkiḷār* adores the *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* as true leaders or *talaivar* (தலைவர்) pointing to the fact of divine and human intersecting in them (PP. 141).⁷⁷ *Cēkkiḷār* also makes reference to *Murukaṇ* and the performances of dance by the devotees to obtain his benevolence in the *Periya Purāṇam* when he states that ‘... they celebrated festivals with dancing and spirit possessions in honour of the great *Murukaṇ*’ (PP. 660)⁷⁸.

⁷⁶ ‘காதலின் உவந்து வரங்கொடுத்த தன்றே ஒருமுகம்’ (Tirum.94).

⁷⁷ ‘...பூசம் நீறுபோல் உள்ளும் புனிதர்கள்
தேசினால் எத்திசையும் விளக்கினார்
பேச ஒண்ணாப் பெருமை பிறங்கினர்’ (பெ.பு.141).

‘... The whiteness of the ash reflects the purity of their hearts. Their greatness is beyond words. Their splendour illuminates the whole world’ (PP. 141)

⁷⁸ ‘... போர்அணி நெடுவே லோற்குப் புகழ்புரி குரவை தூங்கப், பேர் அணங்கு ஆடல் செய்து பெருவிழா எடுத்த பின்றை’ (பெ.பு. 660).

A significant aspect of *aṇaṇku* i.e. ‘awe-inspiring supernatural force’ is in the *Caṇkam* poetry; it has the potential to move in space⁷⁹. This aspect of movement is attributed to another significant term in *Caṇkam* classics i.e. *kadavul* (கடவுள்); a notion that could be understood as a synonym for the concept *aṇaṇku* (Dubianski , 2000, p. 9). The term *kadavul* (கடவுள்) has been interpreted in different ways. The word *Ka+da* (க+ட) connote the sense of ‘movement’, ‘surpassing’ and ‘crossing over’. The verbal derivation is that ‘to traverse’, ‘to pass’ or to ‘transcend’. The word *Ul* (உள்) implies ‘interior’ or ‘the within’. Hart points out that the term denotes ‘that which transcends mind’ (1975, p. 26-27). Hence, the word *kada* (கட: ‘transcend’ , ‘crossing over’) + *Ul* (‘interior’: உள்) implies a movement of crossing over to dwell in the interior of a place denoting a sense of going beyond all categories of existence and indwelling in the places. This specifically underlines the paradoxical nature of Tamil divinities and spirits: they are restricted to a place (*Ul* : உள்) yet they ‘cross over’ (*kada* : கட) traverse the boundary of space (Dubianski 2000, p. 8-9).

The *Caṇkam* poetry speaks about ‘*kadavul* moving from the pillars’ (Aka. 307:12)⁸⁰, ‘inhabiting the places’ (Aka. 348:8)⁸¹ and ‘domiciling in the houses’ (Aka. 282:18)⁸². This implies the conception of ‘awe-inspiring supernatural force’ inhabiting places: an idea that points to a ‘localized conception of the supernatural’ (Hardy, 1983, p. 135) in *Caṇkam* poetry. It indicates to an existence of a powerful relationship among the

⁷⁹ ‘... அணங்கு கால் கிளரும், மயங்கு இருள் நடு நாள்...’ (நற். 319:6).

‘... The demons wander about in this midnight...’ (Nat. 319.6).

Here the night is depicted as the time during which *aṇaṇku* moves.

⁸⁰ ‘... கடவுள் போகிய கருந் தாட் கந்தத்து’ (அக. 307:12).

⁸¹ ‘... கடவுள் ஓங்கு வரைக்கு ஓக்கி, குறவர்’ (அக. 348.8).

⁸² ‘... இல் உறை கடவுட்கு ஆக்குதும், பலியே!...’ (அக. 282.18).

‘awe-inspiring supernatural force’, space and humanity; a fundamental feature of the classical Tamil literature. The belief in the manifestation of this ‘awe-inspiring supernatural force’ also implies that the same space is intimately shared by the human and that which is divine. This belief in the ‘awe-inspiring supernatural force’ i.e. *aṇaṇku* (அணங்கு) and conceiving the cosmos as concealing the primordial power is considered by David Shulman as the ‘phenomenon of localization’ (1980, pp. 40-89). This permitted space and time (*talam*: தலம்) being considered as ‘sacred geography’ (Spencer, 1970). It is also observable in verses like ‘*kaṭavuḷkaṇṇu*’ (கடவுற்கற்பு) i.e. divine chastity (Kur. 252)⁸³, ‘*kaṭavuḷ elutiya pāvaiyin*’ (கடவுள் எழுதிய பாவையின்) referring to a statue made by god (Aka. 62)⁸⁴, the word *kaṭavuḷ* is used in *Caṅkam* classics to exemplify something of excellence of this ‘awe-inspiring supernatural force’ i.e. *aṇaṇku*.

The identification of religious practices that is performed to allure ‘*aṇaṇku* (அணங்கு)’ in the form of a dance with particular place where god is believed to have his ‘abode’ or ‘dwell’ or have a concentrated presence is a motif which frequently occurs in the *Periya Purāṇam*. *Cēkḷilār*’s poetry reveals the pan-Indian *Śiva* as intimately linked to Tamil landscape and culture crowded with local religious and cultural meaning. *Śiva* is depicted as the one who ‘dances in the sacred court’ (PP. 20)⁸⁵, dwells in mount *Kailāsa* (PP. 11)⁸⁶ and manifests in human form (PP. 224)⁸⁷ in the *Periya Purāṇam*. *Śiva* is

⁸³ ‘...கடவுள் கற்பின் அவன் எதிர் பேணி...’ (குறு. 252).

⁸⁴ ‘...கடவுள் எழுதிய பாவையின்...’ (அக. 62)

⁸⁵ ‘...நாதனார் ஆதி தேவனார் கோயில்
நாயகன் நந்தி எம் பெருமான்...’ (பெ.பு. 20).
‘...the Lord *Śiva* himself dances in the sacred court...’ (PP. 20).

⁸⁶ ‘பொன்னின் வெண்திரு நீறு புனைந்துஎனப்
பன்னும் நீள்பனி மால்வரைப் பாலது
தன்னை யார்க்கும் அறிவு அரியான் என்றும்
மன்னி, வாழ் கயிலைத் திரு மாமலை’ (பெ.பு. 11).

described in *Cēkkiḷār's* work as wandering in search of his devotees in the Tamil region (PP. 90)⁸⁸. *Śiva's* wandering around the Tamil region becomes the motif for the Tamil saints to travel to so many places propagating their ideal of service in the *Periya Purāṇam*. It must be emphasized, as Peterson note, the 'love of God can become a reality to the Tamils only if it is set in the context of the traditional Tamil correlation of emotional and physical landscapes' (1982, p. 74). No doubt, *Cēkkiḷār* carefully built on his expertise of Tamil tradition with its profound belief in the possibility of a personal relationship with the 'awe-inspiring supernatural force' and its dwelling in places and events. In this way, *Cēkkiḷār* tries not only to build a relationship between Tamil language, land and *Śiva* but unites the *Saiva* community and links it to the broader Indian tradition surrounding *Śiva*. *Śiva* is presented as dwelling in and intimately connected to Tamil landscape and culture.

What is even more significant to Tamil *Caṅkam* community is that the bards, whose way of life and service set precedence to the *nāyaṇmār* of the *Periya Purāṇam*, were employed by the kings and the people as messengers and mediators between the

'The holy mountain of *Kailāsa* is the permanent abode of the Lord *Śiva*, who is beyond all human knowledge. It is part of the snow-capped Himalaya range, glittering white as though adorned with sacred ash' (PP. 11).

⁸⁷ 'நாவலர்கோன் ஆருரன்
தனைவெண்ணெய் நல்லூரில்
மேவும் அருள்துறை அமர்ந்த
வேதியர் ஆட்கொண்டதற்பின்
பூ அலரும் தடம் பொய்கைத்
திருநாவலூர் புகுந்து தேவர்...' (பெ.பு. 224)

'In this way the Lord who dwells in the temple of *Aruṭṭurai* at *Veṇṇeyhallūr* came in the guise of a Brahmin and made *Nampi Ārūrar* of *Nāvalūr* his servant' (PP. 224).

⁸⁸ 'அங்கு உரைக்கு என் அளவு அப்பதியிலார்
தங்கள் மாளிகையின் ஒன்று சம்புவின்
பங்கினாள் திருச்சேடி பரவையாம்
மங்கையார் அவதாரம் செய் மாளிகை' (பெ.பு. 90).

'It was there too that the Lord went with message for *Vaṇṭonṭar*, his rebellious servant, and wherever he walked through the brightly lit and decorated streets, his lotus feet left a lingering fragrance' (PP. 90).

human and the *aṇaṇku* (அணங்கு) or the ‘awe-inspiring supernatural force’ to evoke and control the presence of these meta-cosmic powers in the cosmos ‘from within’ (Kersenboom-Story, 1987, p. 204) for the cosmic prosperity. By virtue of their experience of the mystical vision and by the fact that these meta-cosmic powers were manifested in them, the bards had the potentiality of deification and its control. As the recital of the poems of the bards and their dance end, as Ramanujan notes, ‘the chief dancer and the god have become one. The dancer does not simply worship or adore the god; he invokes the god by representing him’ (1981, p. 115).

In their mystical quest to embody the ineffable qualities of these forces and its causes in anthropocentric notions, the bards identified *aṇaṇku* (அணங்கு) and its function in terms of love (*aṇpu*: அன்பு)⁸⁹ and heroism (*vīram*: வீரம்). These two terms were later used to classify the function of the world and were attributed to the *aṇaṇku* and became ideals to be achieved. The two functions which were projected on to this *aṇaṇku* were also assigned to humans. It was thought human beings had these two powerful qualities of love (*aṇpu*: அன்பு) and heroism (*vīram*: வீரம்). Hence, the civil responsibility of the bards of auspiciously awaking the king by beating of the drums in the morning was considered sacred. Their songs in praise of the bravery of king (Pur. 231:1)⁹⁰, their ballads composed in memory of the fallen heroes who fell in the cause of service in

⁸⁹ The indigenous concept of love in early *Caṅkam* poetry is presented of consisted of two different stages; ‘secret love’ (*kaḷavu* : களவு) and ‘open love’ (*kaṇpu* : கற்பு , lit. ‘Publically known love’). In the actual *Caṅkam* poetry love becomes public either by an indigenous type of formal wedding ceremony or by elopement. Although it is common among Tamils to adopt the rendering of ‘pre-marital love’ for (*kaḷavu*) and ‘post-marital love’ for *kaṇpu* for convenience, both of these terms are secondary meanings of these terms.

⁹⁰ ‘எரிபுனக் குறவன் குறையல் அன்ன
கரிபுற விறகின் ஈம ஒள்அழல்...’ (புற. 231:1)
‘The glory of our king ... will not fade, will not die’ (Pur. 231:1).

protecting the land (Pur. 223),⁹¹ their songs sung to ignite a communion with the spirit of the fallen heroes (Pur. 223),⁹² gave a mystical vision of the meta-cosmic powers abiding in them. The forms of love and heroism were shared by divinity and humanity in the midst of the temporality of human existence. The musical instruments lute (*yal*: யாழ்) that accompanied their songs (*pans*: பன்) were also considered as cosmic abodes of the meta-cosmic powers.

Therefore, any recitals of the poems, with the accompaniment of these musical instruments were thought of, as functionaries of keeping the meta-cosmic powers and the cosmos in order. Thus, the Tamil mind began early its passion for the mystical quest of the meta-cosmic reality that moulded the *nāyaṇmār*'s religious expression of service and moral living later found in the *Periya Purāṇam*. As Ramanujan notes 'just as the classical Tamil bard wandered, visited, and praised patrons, the saints, too, wandered to the holy places and sang of them and the gods there' (1981, p.12). A consistent theme in the *Periya Purāṇam* is in honouring the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* who through their (*aṇpu*: அன்பு) and heroism (*vīram*: வீரம்) manifested as service and in moral living yearned for the vision of *Śiva* who possessed both the auspicious and fierce forces i.e. love (*aṇpu*:

⁹¹ 'பலர்க்கு நிழலாகி, உலகம் மீக்கறித்
தலைப்போ கன்மையிற் சிறுவழி மடங்கி
நிலைபெறு நடுகல் ஆகியக் கண்ணும்
இடங் கொடுத்து அளிப்ப மன்ற-உடம்போடு
இன்னுயிர் விரும்பும் கிழமைத்
தொன்னட் புடையார் தம்உழைச் செலினே! (புற. 223)

'Oh king ! You were like a shadow to many, you gave, you showed your kindness and you were with great fame. Even after your death , being enduring and deeply rooted " *Nadukal*" or stone If someone goes to him ... with long standing love ... [they] will make a place for him' . I have got the benefit of close friendship. (Pur. 223).

⁹² '...இன்னுயிர் விரும்பும் கிழமைத்
தொன்னட் புடையார் தம்உழைச் செலினே...' (புற. 223)

'... became enduring and deeply rooted stones. If someone goes to him ... with long standing love ... [they] will make a place for him' (Pur. 223).

அன்பு) and heroism (*vīram*: வீரம்) (PP.2310,567)⁹³. When *Śiva* and the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* are narrated, one sees the resonances of the bard's worldviews of the *Caṅkam* age. For example, the *Periya Purāṇam* narrates the life of the *Tirunīlakaṇṭar Yālppāṇar* (திருநீலகண்ட நாயனார்) (PP. 4220 - 4231)⁹⁴ who through his service of composition and recital of music immersed himself with the vision of *Śiva* who through his love and heroism governed the universe.

What are even more significant in the *Caṅkam* age, which eventually influenced the *Periya Purāṇam*, are the literary precepts that were used by the minstrel singers for their quest to attain the meta-cosmic powers through poems; this was systematized in *Tolkāppiyam* (தொல்காப்பியம்)⁹⁵ which is celebrated as 'the first literary expression of the

⁹³ 'திருஞான சம்பந்தர் திருக்குட முக்கினை சேர ...
பெருமான் எம்இறை என்று
பெருகு இசையால் பரவினார்' (பெ.பு. 2310).

'On arrival, Campantar sang in Tamil a hymn of praise of the Lord, his heart melting with joy' (PP. 2310).

'ஆறும் மதியும் அணியும் சடைமேல்
ஏறும் மலரைக் கரிசிந்துவதே
வேறுஉள் நினைவார் புரம்வெந்து அவியச்
சீறும் சிலையாய் சிவதா சிவதா' (பெ.பு. 567)

'The flowers to adorn your mattered locks, the elephant has scattered in the street! Lord *Śiva*, in your wrath you burnt the cities of your enemies' (PP. 567).

⁹⁴ He is a professional musician and devotee of Lord *Śiva*. His hobby was to travel temple to temple singing songs of praise for *Śiva* accompanied by his favourite musical instrument *yāl* (யாழ்). One day he went to the a temple in Madura and began to play his *yāl*. Blessed by his music, Lord *Śiva* instructed the temple priest to bring him inside the shrine. Lord *Śiva* granted heard him sing in the shrine and granted his blessing. At the moment a voice rang out from heaven: "if you put the lute on which the musician plays with such devotion on the damp ground, it will go out of tune. So give him a proper wooden dais to put it on".

'அந்தரத்து எழுந்த ஓசை அன்பினில் பாண்பாடும் சந்தயாழ் தரையில் சீதம் தாக்கில்வீக்கு
அழியும் என்று சுந்தரப் பலகை முன்றீர் இடும்எனத் தொண்டர் இட்டார் செந்தமிழ் பாணனாரும்
திருவருள் பெற்றுச் சேர்ந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 4225).

When he had spent some time there, he took leave of the Lord with his blessing went place to place singing his praise (PP. 4220 - 4231).

⁹⁵ The date and the authorship of *Tolkāppiyam* (*Thonmai*: தொண்மை or *Tol*: தொல் 'ancient' or 'old' + *kāppiyam*: காப்பியம் epic: i.e. the ancient epic which safeguards the integrity of the Tamil language) are constantly debated in academic circles. While scholars like *Srinivasa Iyengar* attributes this work to be of a single author i.e. *Tolkāppiyānār* (1983, p.211), a disciple of *Agsthiyar*, the mystical precursor who brought from Lord *Śiva* the Tamil grammar and language others such as *Zvelebil* attributes the work to be of *Caṅkam* academia (1973, p.47).

indigenous, pre-Aryan Indian civilization’ and ‘the essence and summary of classical Tamil literature’ (Zvelebil, 1975, p. 131). Hence, the importance of *Tolkāppiyam* lies not only in its treatment of the Tamil language in its parts of speech i.e. *eluttu* : எழுத்து (letters), *col* : சொல் (words), *yāppu* : யாப்பு (form) and *ani* : அணி (method), *porul*: பொருள் (meaning), and its literary standardization of the poetic techniques of these bards but also in its setting of the syntaxes formulated for the anthropocentric notion of the mystical power as inferred by the bards as the *porul* (பொருள்) which is the substance of Tamil poetry.

In fact, the dynamics of the now defied *aṇaṅku* (அணங்கு) or ‘awe-inspiring supernatural force’ which began to be viewed as ‘sacred powers’ is spoken of, essentially, through the medium of two broad poetic and grammatical genres. These are *akapporu!* (அகப்பொருள்) or *akam* (அகம்) that which encompasses the ‘interior’ or ‘inner life’ – and *purapporu!* (புறப்பொருள்) or *puram* (புறம்) – which refer to the ‘exterior’ or ‘outer realm of life’; they constitute two intimately intertwined phases of life, and is made on the basis of psychological and psychic experience. These two contrasting but reciprocal phases of life, ‘paradox of embodied absence and presence’ (Cole, 1985, pp. 1-9), ‘spatial doubling’ and a ‘superimposition of one world upon the other’ (Cole, 1985, p. 19), mirror the two essences of human living which are devotional in nature; they are love (*aṇpu*: அன்பு) and heroism (*vīram*: வீரம்). It is this ideal of love and heroism established as a literary genre that was later used as a literary precept to explain the religious expression of service and of moral living of the Tamil saints as a deep love for *Śiva* and heroic service for his devotees in the *Periya Purāṇam*.

Even more remarkable is that, though, neither is a systematized philosophical or metaphysical speculation, this concept of love (*aṇṇu*: அன்பு) and heroism (*vīram*: வீரம்) captivated the Tamil mind of the period, which was emerging to carve its own identity in the face of an influx of varying cultures into the Tamil environment. It is their understanding of the phenomenon of life termed *porul* (பொருள்) as a synthetic totality of the bi-polarities of love (*aṇṇu*: அன்பு) and heroism (*vīram*: வீரம்) reflected as ‘domestic’ and ‘public’, ‘passive’ and ‘active’, ‘spiritual’ and ‘material’, ‘inner’ and ‘outer’, ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’, that played a significant role in shaping the *Caṅkam* literary formulae. Human living in the external realm (*puram*: புறம்) was closely interconnected with that of the internal realm i.e. *aham* (அகம்). This in turn had a significant influence in the shaping of the Tamil saints of the *Periya Purāṇam* and their religious expression of service and of moral living as a synthetic totality of the bi-polarities of love (*aṇṇu*: அன்பு) and heroism (*vīram*: வீரம்) as presented in the *Periya Purāṇam*. The lives of the *nāyaṇmār* as the presented in the *Periya Purāṇam* validate the dynamic integral links between the ‘inner’ (*aham*: அகம்) and ‘outer’ realm (*puram*: புறம்).

The stories of the *nāyaṇmār* as narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam* are all woven around this theme of love (*aṇṇu*: அன்பு) and heroism (*vīram*: வீரம்). The story of *Mūrti nāyaṇār* (மூர்த்தி நாயனார்) (PP. 973-1021)⁹⁶ exemplifies this, in that in spite of the

⁹⁶ It was his regular practice to provide sandal paste for the adornment of the Lord *Śiva* in the temple. In those days, the king of *vaṭuka karunāṭars* decided to annex the *pāṇṭya* country by the force of arms. The king came under the influence of the Jainism and began to persecute the devotees of the Lord *Śiva*. In spite of the king’s persistent attack the *nāyaṇār* continued without fail to carry out his act of service as before. The king angered by such devotion began to cut off his supply of sandal wood for making paste. So the saint thought to himself that ‘I can not longer grind sandal paste for the body of the dancing Lord’, ‘but my hand will not cease from grinding’.

‘நட்டம் புரிவார் அணி நல்திரு மெய்ப்பூச்சு இன்று முட்டம் பரிசு ஆயினும் தேய்க் கும்மை முட்டாது என்று வட்டம் திகழ் பாரையின் வைத்து முழங்கை தேய்த்தார் கட்டும் புறந்தோல்

obstacles placed before him to continue his service of providing sandal wood for worship, the *nāyaṇār* with love and courage offered service to *Śiva*. Similarly, the narration of the life of *Taṇṭi Aṭkaḷ nāyaṇār* (தண்டியடிகள் நாயனார்) (PP. 3597-3622)⁹⁷ who was so determined to serve the Lord *Śiva* even when he was not able to see, posits the narrative according to the literary conventions of *aham* (அகம்) and of *puram* (புறம்) as delineated in the *Tolkāppiyam*. In that whole incident and its aftermath the reader would recognise the reference to earlier *Caṅkam* literary convention. It is within this context *nāyaṇār*'s religious expression of service and of moral living is described. In the same way the heroism expressed by these Tamil saints are recorded in the *Periya Purāṇam*.

As standardized in the *Tolkāppiyam*, the *aham* poetries, centred on the theme of love, addressed the 'inner world', the 'interior landscape' (Ramanujan, 1994) or inner attitude of the human being as a person. Under this *aham* poetry comes what is supposed to be the most internal, personal, and directly incommunicable human experience, and that is love in all phases. The inner attitude of the person is revealed in the form of love nowhere else more than within the intimate world of the household. The highest

நரம்பு என்பு கரைந்து தேய' (பெ.பு. 992).

With that he placed his elbow on the grind-stone and ground away until the skin and bone and sinew was all reduced to pulp. The Lord himself could not bear the sight that appeared to him and consoled the saint (PP. 973-1021).

⁹⁷ This *nāyaṇār* according to the *Periya Purāṇam* is blind from birth. He used to daily worship at the temple of *Ārūr*. Now beside the tank on the West side of the temple, the Jains were extending their monastic buildings and causing serious congestion. When *Taṇṭi Aṭkaḷ* realized what was happening, he determined to counter it by digging operation to widen the tank. Immediately the Jains raised uproar saying that digging into the earth would cause the death of many creatures buried in the mud. The saint went up to the gates of the temple, prayed for redress against the shame inflicted on him, went up to his mutt and sank into troubled sleep. Then the Lord appeared to him in the dream and consoled the saint saying: 'do not let your heart grieve', 'you will receive your eye sight'

'நெஞ்சில் மருவும் கவலையினை ஒழிநீ ... நின்கண்விழுத்து ... காண்கின்றாய் அஞ்ச வேண்டா' (பெ.பு. 3609).

. Then the saint rose to the surface praising the Lord and gained clear eye-sight and the Jains lost their eye sight (PP. 3597-3621).

revelation of the virtue of love within the household, as depicted in *Tolkāppiyam* is embodied in the chaste love of a woman (*karpū*: கற்பு) (Aka.16:18-20).⁹⁸ This chaste love was considered a benevolent revelation of the *aṇaṇku* (அணங்கு) and was elevated to the status of the divine, which surpasses human physicality. This chaste love, which lies within the control of human emotion, is considered as mystical in nature. This love and its mystical intensity, when controlled and channelled, stands the test of time in marital separation (*pirivu*: பிறிவு) that often occurred due to war and national duties and most specifically at times of marital infidelity among the *Caṅkam* Tamils (Ain. 229).⁹⁹ Since marital separation often occurred as a result of the needs of the household, for the love of family and service of the state, the help of the bards was sought to keep the ‘purity’ of love, and the sacrament of marriage auspiciously alive in the family; it was kept from being defiled from other forms of ‘one sided love’ (*kaikilai*: கைக்கிழை), ‘mismatched love’ (*peruntinai*: பெறுந்தினை) and ‘clandestine love’ (*kalavu*: கலவு) among *Caṅkam* Tamils.¹⁰⁰

The quest of love, in terms of martial separation takes various trajectories according to changing circumstances and the complexity of relationships. Love in *aham*

⁹⁸ ‘...மகிழ்ந! – வானத்து
அணங்கு அருங் கடவுள் அனனோள், நின்
மகன் தாய் ஆதல் புரைவது – ஆங்கு எனவே’ (அக.16:18-20)
‘My Lord how could I love her? Who is life, the goddess of chastity full of power in the heaven?’ (Aka. 16-18-20).

⁹⁹ ‘அம்ம வாழி தோழி நாம்அழப்
பன்னாள் பிரிந்த அறனி லாளன்
வந்தன னோமற்று இரவில்
பொன்போல் விறல்கவின் கொள்ளுநின் நுதலே’ (ஐங். 229).
‘May you live long my friend ... your unkind lover made us weep by leaving us ...yet your winning beautiful forehead shines like gold’ (Ain. 229).

¹⁰⁰ ‘சொல்லுமதி மாண சொல்லுதோறு இனிய
நாடிடை விலங்கிய எம்வயின் நாள்தொறும்...’ (ஐங். 479).
‘Tell me, bard who make all your words so sweet ... tell what she, her eyes cold flowers, said for me’ (Ain. 479).

poetry is spoken of, in different ways or in themes (*turai*: துறை) according to the changing contexts of space and time (*tinai*: திணை). The intuitive insight of the *Caṅkam* poets was to indentify the trajectories of this inner emotion of love with landscape which suggests the essence of love ‘baffling in its antiquity and its singularity’ (Thaninayagam, 1966, p. 39). Thus, love is identified and characterised as: (i) furtive (*punarthal* : புனர்தல்) - with an infatuated anxiety of longing, (ii) chaste (*irrutal* : இருத்தல்) - with a religious perseverance of waiting in trust, (iii) benevolent (*udal*:உடல்) - with a silent resentment towards infidelity and empathetic reconciliation, (iv) severance (*irangal*:இறங்கல்) - with a desolation of parting and relentlessness, and (v) mystical (*pirithal*: பிறிதல்) - with a sorrow in the moment of separation and union in essence and being (Patippācīriyar, 1995, p.16).

Love is spoken of, in a mystical sense as the inner movement of power, the interior dialogue that longs in time of material separation for passionate union and harmony. The five facets of love are perceived (*katci*: காட்சி) and conceived (*karuṭu*: கருத்து) as world views or *ulakam* (உலகம்) through association with vibrant territorial imageries that are unique to the Tamil environment, such as gods, flora, deities, music, occupation and seasons (Patippācīriyar, 1995, p.3). A persistent narration in the *Periya Purāṇam* is the love and religious life of *Cuntarar nāyaṇār* (சுந்தரரர் நாயனார்) (PP. 27-29, 147-349, 3140-3374, 3752-3927, 4234-4286). When one reads his life story, it resonates the events that are treated in *aham* (அகம்) poetries of *Caṅkam* literature. For example in the narration, *Cēkkiḷār* records the meeting between *Cuntarar nāyaṇār* and *Paravaiyār* (புறவையார்) i.e. *Cuntarar nāyaṇār*’s wife (PP. 6: 284ff). Later in the

narration when *Cuntarar nāyaṇār* marries another woman *Paravaiyār* comes to hear of it (PP. 35. 3473ff), her reaction to the news recalls the traditional mode of the lovers' quarrel (*udal*: ஊடல்) as presented in *Caṅkam* literature. Accordingly, it is clear, that the stories of the lives of the saints as given in the *Periya Purāṇam* are also set against the backdrop of Tamil landscapes composed with the literary precepts employed in the *aham* poetry of *Tolkāppiyam* (PP. 51-85, 1088-1105)¹⁰¹.

On the other hand, *puram* poetry vividly presents the exterior or social life of the *Caṅkam* person. The heroism expressed through tribal wars, moral integrity, loyalty, hospitality, service and eulogies addressed to the tribal chiefs for their heroic service and moral living are the popular themes of *puram* (புறம்) poetry.¹⁰² The *puram* literature also records the history of Tamil society which was emerging to carve its own collective identity in the face of tyrannical immigrant force like *Maravar* (மறவர்)¹⁰³ who by means of instigating violence, emerged to capture land, cattle and women (Ramachandran C., 1974, pp. 60-68). In fact, the emergence of these forces added to the stratification of

¹⁰¹ For Example:

‘பாட்டு இயல்தமிழ்உரை பயின்ற எல்லையுள்
கோட்டு உயர் பனிவரைக் குன்றின் உச்சியில்
சூட்டிய வளர்புலிச் சோழர் காவிரி
நாட்டு இயல்பதனை யான் நவிலல் உற்றனன்.’ (பெபு 51).

‘The land watered by river *kāveri* falls within the region where the Tamil language is in common use for speech and song. It was ruled by the *Cōḷa* kings, who had once planted their tiger standard on the summit of the snow-capped Himalaya Mountains. I shall now give a description of that land’ (PP. 51).

¹⁰² ‘சுன்று புறந்தருதல் எந்தலைக் கடனே;
கான்றோன் ஆக்குதல் தந்தைக்குக் கடனே;
வேல்வடித்துக் கொடுத்தல் கொல்லற்குக் கடனே;
நன்னடை நல்கல் வேந்தற்குக் கடனே;
ஒளிறுவாள் அருஞ்சமம் முருக்கிக்;
களிறுஎறிந்து பெயர்தல் காளைக்குக் கடனே’ (புற. 312)

‘To give birth to a son and nurture him is my duty. To make him gracious is the father’s duty. To make spears for him is the blacksmith’s. To show him noble ways is the king’s. And to bear a bright sword ... is the young man’s duty’ (Pur. 312).

¹⁰³ *Maravar* (‘grate Warriors’ or ‘punishers’) are one of the oldest martial groups in India. Legend has it that the term *Maravar* is derived from the Tamil word ‘*marani*’ (மரணி) i.e. sin for their sin of inflicting harm on others without remorse (Ramaswamy, 2007, p. 143).

society and curtailed the voice of the subaltern i.e. *vēlālar* (வேளாளர்) or farmers, who were *vēlālar* (வேளாளர்) i.e farmers the land owning agricultural Dravidian society. In the face of the oppression and difficulty in safeguarding the fundamental institution of family and the community in terms of land became paramount: heroism for the protection of the household, service and self-sacrifice for the safeguarding of the community became a necessity. The *puram* literature classifies the dynamics of heroism, not as that which stems from a person's desire, viz. for reputation, but as a way of asserting prosperity for households in which the *aṇaṇku* (அணங்கு) in the form of love abides (Kailasapathy, 1968, pp. 230-258). Heroism was not only considered as the virtue of a hero, but was seen as an exemplification of an all-embracing love, a symbol of a household (Patippācīriyar, 1995, p. 75).

The significance of *puram* (புறம்) poetry, therefore, in terms of manifestation of devotion as presented in the *Periya Purāṇam* lies in its presentation of the idea of service and of moral living symbolized and amplified in the self-sacrifice made by the heroes in defence of the interior space of love or *aham*. This love, in cases of the death of heroes who die protecting the land, is kept alive in iconographic form carved on stones. These stones were carved for those who gallantly sacrificed themselves, by serving the community and were an indication of how their sense of service and love were highly valued in early Tamil society.¹⁰⁴ The stones (*naṭukkal* : நடுக்கல்) were believed to have been emblazoned by God (*kadavul eluthia kal*: கடவுள் எழுதிய கல்) and the spirit of heroes was considered as descending to find a home (*illam*: இல்லம்) in them: they were

¹⁰⁴ ‘...ஒன்றாயிற்று அன்னோன் புகழ் மாயலவே!’ (புற. 231).
‘...The fame he has gained will never fade away’ (Pur. 231).

sculptured as an iconic presentation of love which allowed for a fostering of a union with the deceased (Pur. 232)¹⁰⁵. The practise was rooted in the belief that it fostered a union with the dearly departed, whose defied spirit was incarnated in stone. Rituals were enacted to foster the mystical union of hearts. The union occurred through a gradual process from an initial stage of yearning to a vision (*katchi* : காட்சி) of seeing the spirit of the hero that led to the invocation of the fallen, to abide in a stone (*kalkol*: கல்கொல்). The stone was then sculptured, immersed into water as a sacred symbol of re-initiation (*natuthal*: நடுதல்); food offerings were made as a sign of the union and a blessing in the form of an eternal vision of enrapture (Pur. 306).¹⁰⁶

Though, the quest to transcend the visible realities seems quite incomplete at first appearance in the *Tolkāppiyam* and in the *Caṅkam*'s mind, the works of early grammarians of the in-depth complexity of Tamil syntax with its remarkable awareness to changing patterns of life in Tamil society, indicate that *Caṅkam* assemblies may have reasoned from the visible sphere i.e. from the perceived phenomenon, to the invisible unperceivable sphere. The *Tolkāppiyam* offers a glimpse into an early Tamil understanding of the totality of the phenomenon, in which religious experience is conceived and based on paradigms of polar imageries of love (*aham*) and heroism (*Puram*), as internal struggles to conquer the inner geography. These are the foundation of the quest for union with meta-cosmic power *aṇaṅku* (அணங்கு) or 'awe-inspiring supernatural force'. What is observable is that as, Varadarajan notes, 'in these poems of

¹⁰⁵ '...நடுகல் பீலி குட்டி...' (புற. 232)

'We have placed peacock feathers on his headstone' (Pur. 232).

¹⁰⁶ '...அரிவை நடுகல் கைதொழுது பரவும்...' (புற. 232).

'The women with soft hair and a bright forehead prays to the ancestor stone ... and worships it' (Pur. 306).

the theme of love, the beauty of nature is blended with sentiments of love with graciousness of imagination that defies analysis' (1969, p.404).

In this way, significant literary images are interlaced together, 'in a marvellously unique and fluid blending of geography, metaphor and imagination' (Selby and Peterson, 2008, p. 17). This portrays the profound experience of inner (*aham*: அகம்) and outer (*puram*: புறம்) which is religious in nature and became fundamental to Tamil *Śaiva* religiosity as shown in the *Periya Purāṇam*. The *nāyaṇmār*'s expression of devotional service and of moral living in the *Periya Purāṇam* oscillates in a relationship between the inner geography, interior phenomenon and the external outer geography, that is, *Śiva*. What is even more remarkable is the accentuation of the *aṇaṅku* (அணங்கு) or 'awe-inspiring impersonal power' embodying the opposite forces of love and valour in a unity of juxtaposition. This unity in harmony is seen as a meta-cosmic correctness, which kept the cosmic order of the world. Hence, the mediating and keeping of this harmony in chaste love, within cosmic living, is the highest religious fulfilment of life which was intuitively realized by the *Caṅkam* mind, early as human consciousness.

Even though one cannot overemphasize the enormous influence the *Tolkāppiyam* had on the creation of the *Periya Purāṇam*, it also definitely shaped its literary convention for the presentation of the Tamil saints' religious expressions of service and morality woven around the literary genre of love (*aham*) and heroism (*puram*). These paradigms are set against a division of landscape (PP. 1088-1128), seasons (PP. 2231-2235) that are unique to the *Tolkāppiyam*. The valour in which *Kaṇṇappār nāyaṇār*

(கண்ணப்ப நாயனார்)¹⁰⁷ pursued his worship of *Śiva-linga* stone, resonate the hero-stone worship found in *Caṅkam* literature. The heroism that was shown by *Tiruñāṇacampantar nāyaṇār* (திருஞான சம்பந்தர்) to reinstate splendour of *Śaivism*'s in the meadival Tamil region, echoes the valour in which the chieftain-king protected the *Caṅkam* Tamil community (PP. 1348-1422). *Kaliyar nāyaṇār* (கலிய நாயனார்)¹⁰⁸ filling the oil-lamp with his own blood (PP. 4027-4043), *Kōṭpuli nāyaṇār* (கோட்புலி நாயனார்)¹⁰⁹ punishing his relatives for the stealing of things that belonged to God are other examples of heroism (PP. 4139-4151). Similarly one could identify *Cēkkiḷār*'s careful usage of the moral discourse of *Tirukkural* (திருக்குறள்) in the hagiography of the *nāyaṇmār* which are addressed in the following paragraphs.

2.3 The Moral Quest and the Moral Exhortations of the *Tirukkural*

The shift in Tamil literary conventions as an ethical treatise in the post-*Caṅkam* period was marked by the influence of Buddhism and Jainism which began to take roots in early Tamil history. It was during this period, drawing moral axioms from various ideologies, that the *Tirukkural* [(திருக்குறள்) (*Tiru* : திரு – venerable or sacred + *Kural* : குறள் –

¹⁰⁷ This *nāyaṇār* was a mountain dweller and a hunter. One day he went out for hunting, he came across Lord *Śiva* in the form of lingam standing alone in the mountain. He embraced the lingam and kissed it. Reluctant leave the Lord alone, he began to feed the Lord with food and guard him. This went on for six days. On the sixth day when he returned from collecting food for the Lord, he was grieved to see blood issuing from the Lord's right eye. At once, with his own arrow, he plucked out his own eye and fixed it over the right eye of the Lord. Then he began to notice the left eye was bleeding. There was only one obstacle – how to replace the eye of the Lord when his own eye was plucked. So, he planted his foot at the place where the Lord's left eye was on the lingam, and began to pull his left eye out, with his arrow. At once, moved by the saint's devotion Lord *Śiva* took him with both hands and placed him on his right side (PP. 650-835).

¹⁰⁸ He was devotee whose service in the temple took the form of providing oil for lighting the lamps in the temples. He hailed from the family of oil-extractors. In due time the occupation that provided him with ever-increasing wealth ceased to yield a profit. However, without being discouraged he intended to light the lamps with his own blood. So he took up the knife and slashed his own throat. At the moment the Lord intervened and stayed his hand (PP. 4027-4043).

¹⁰⁹ For description of the life of *Kōṭpuli nāyaṇār*, see p. 12.

couplets) which is considered as ‘the greatest ethical treatise written in the Tamil language’ (Gopalan, 1997, p. 112) were composed. It is another significant work which antedates the *Periya Purāṇam. Tirukkural*, the revered book of wisdom, the 1330 couplets in 133 chapters, was believed to have been composed by *Tiruvalluvar* (திருவள்ளுவர்: ‘Holy Weaver’) of uncertain date perhaps in the post-*Caṅkam* period.¹¹⁰ Though little is known about him, his work is non-sectarian and it is didactic i.e. intended to teach. It points to the fact that *Tiruvalluvar* was eager to construct a system of practical ethics, reflecting the positive affirmation of life on earth that is characteristic of Tamil literature that would help the transformation of human life in all its various aspects.

In this work the *Caṅkam* categories of *aham* (அகம்) and *puram* (புறம்) is discarded, and the author classifies his subject matter into three sections viz. *aram* (அறம்) - virtuous conduct, *poruḷ* (பொருள்) - wealth and *kāmam* (காமம்) or *iṇṇam* (இன்பம்) - love¹¹¹ according things that gives firm foundation for life or *urutipporuḷ* (things i.e. *poruḷ* : பொருள் that gives firm foundation i.e. *uruti* for life). They constitute naturalistic but normative ideals to be achieved in human existence. The first section of book dwells on ‘*aram*’ or ‘virtue’ i.e. virtuous conduct of a ‘domestic’ (Chapters 1- 24) and of ‘ascetic’ (Chapters 25-38) life. The second section on ‘*poruḷ*’ or ‘wealth’ is divided into three categories: here the first part focuses on the person of king (Chapter 39-63); the second on good governance (Chapters 64-95), and the third part deals with different

¹¹⁰ *Tiruvalluvar's* life is shrouded in mystery and his time and whereabouts cannot be determined with certainty. However, he is considered to be one of the greatest poets in classical Tamil literature. In all probability he lived and wrote between the second century B.C.E and the eight century A.C.E. Many scholars point to an earlier date (Cutler, 1992, p. 550). Legend has it that he was a weaver. He lived with his wife *Vasuki*, famed for her remarkable loyalty and virtue.

¹¹¹ Though it is believed that the classification of the objective of life as presented in the *Tirukkural* may correspond to the four *purusārthas* i.e. *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mōksa* of the Sanskrit dharma tradition, scholars argue that they are different from them, see Cutler, 1992, p. 93.

matters concerning human living (Chapters 96-108). The third section of the book is on ethics of ‘*kāmaṁ*’ or ‘love’ expressed in different circumstance of i.e. through ‘secret’ (Chapters 109-115) and ‘public’ marriage (Chapters 116-133). It is believed that the proper pursuit of it would preserve not only the order in the universe but lead one to an intuitive knowledge of the ‘divine inner self’ (Iraianban, 1997, p.10).

A familiar theme in the *Periya Purāṇam* as reflected in the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* is the pursuit of this normative ideals i.e. *aram* (அறம்) (virtue), *poruḷ* (பொருள்) (wealth) and *kāmaṁ* (love) which led them to the vision of intuitive knowledge of the ‘divine inner self’ and of communion with *Śiva*, in whom is inherent all the virtues that order the universe (PP. 218)¹¹². However, *Cēkkiḷār* could be seen as taking these normative ideals especially of *aram* (அறம்) to a new level: *aram* is presented in the *Periya Purāṇam* as intrinsically stemming from and expressing the devotee’s communion with *Śiva* (PP. 438)¹¹³. Likewise, the ideal of *kāmaṁ* (love) is given a new meaning when it comes to be applied primarily to the relationship between *Śiva* and the *nāyaṇmār*. In this context the ideal of *kāmaṁ* (love) is not used in the sense of lust or eroticism but the word *aṇṇu* (அன்பு) is used in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 4153)¹¹⁴. Further, frequent reference to

¹¹² ‘...கோது இலா அமுதே இன்று உன்
குணப்பெருங்கடலை நாயேன்
யாதினை அறிந்துஎன் சொல்லிப்
பாடுகேன் எண்மொழிந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 218)

‘I am ignorant of the ocean of your virtues ... how can I find words to sing your praise?’ (PP. 218).

¹¹³ ‘திருவளர் சிறப்பின் மிக்க
திருத்தொண்டர் தமக்கும் தேற்றம்
மருவிய தெய்வக் கற்பின்
மனைவியார் தமக்கும் தக்க
பெருகிய அருளின் நீடு பேறுஅளித்து...’ (பெ.பு. 438).

‘So the Lord granted abundant grace to his illustrious servant and to his chaste wife’ (PP. 438).

¹¹⁴ ‘... பாவனையால் நோக்கினால் பலர்காணப் பயன்பெறுவார்
மேவுஅரிய அன்பினால் மேலவர்க்கும் மேல்ஆனார்’ (பெ.பு. 4153).

‘...In the intensity of devotion, they have no peer.’ (PP. 4153)

practices such as the worship of God, hospitality to others and paying dues to the state in *Periya Purāṇam* as principles that uphold the cosmic order and the universal truth among the people (PP. 76)¹¹⁵ resonates with the human ideals of life found in *Tirukkural*.

The last of the four *purusārthas*, the supreme aim of life according to Indian tradition, namely *mōksa* or ‘release’ (*vītu*: வீடு) is noticeably not emphasised in the *Tirukkural*. The implicit presentation of *vītu*, the final release from the cycle of birth and death is rather significant, as it is central to the study of religious ideals of the *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam*. The indirect presentation of *vītu* or ‘release’ may be due to the fact that the author’s intention was to have a universal moral principle of life that went beyond the divisions of race, creed, customs and language. Moral attitude and service are indispensable for righteous living in the *Tirukkural* and when practiced will awaken the mystical vision of *vītu* or ‘release’. It is for this reason that from their earliest history ‘the Tamils have recognised ... their own inner voice speaking to them righteousness, justice and morality’ (Subramanian N., 1976, p. 64).

It is remarkable that even in the *Periya Purāṇam*, moral attitude and religious expressions of service are considered indispensable values, for the mystical vision of *Śiva*. By narrating the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* sourced from various strata of society, from

¹¹⁵ ‘அரசுகொள் கடன்கள் ஆற்றி
மிகுதி கொண்டு அறங்கள் பேணி
பரவு அரும்கடவுள் போற்றி
குரவரும் விருந்தும் பண்பின்...
வரைபுரை மாடம் நீடி
மலர்ந்துள பதிகள் எங்கும்’ (பெ.பு. 76)

‘The people of the land pay their dues to the king, give alms in plenty. They provide for the adoration of God and offer hospitality to visitors ...’ (PP. 76)

rulers such as *Pukaḷccōlar* (புகழ்சோழ) *nāyaṇār* (PP. 3947-3987)¹¹⁶ to ordinary citizens such as *Kaṇṇappar nāyaṇār* (PP. 650-835)¹¹⁷, from holy men *Meyp̥porul* (மெய்ப்பொருள்) *nāyaṇār* (PP. 467-490)¹¹⁸ to earthly women *Maṅkaiyarkkaraci* (மங்கையர்க்கரசியார்) *Ammaiyar* (PP. 4194-4196)¹¹⁹, from householders *Tirukuripputtonṭar* (திருக்குறிப்புத் தொண்டர்) (PP. 1083-1210)¹²⁰ to ascetics *Tirumūlar* (திருமூலர்) (PP. 3569-3596)¹²¹, one can recognise that the path of moral living and a true path to communion with *Śiva* goes beyond the binding divisions of race, creed, customs and language.¹²² The path to *Śiva* in the *Periya Purāṇam* is experiencing the true nature of *Śiva* in the daily living of moral ideals.

Tirukkural, as a book of ethical ideals, begins with a chapter in praise of the qualities of *Ādhi Bhagavan* (ஆதி பகவன்) or ‘the primal deity’, without any reference to a

¹¹⁶ *Pukaḷccōlar* had a high sense of duty and responsibility. It is he who offered *eripaththar*, a devotee of Lord *Śiva*, his sword bowing down him, pleaded to be beheaded as he, ultimately, was responsible for any crime in his kingdom (PP. 3947-3987).

¹¹⁷ For the short narration of the life of this saint, see p. 50.

¹¹⁸ *Meyp̥porul* is known for his service to the devotees of the Lord. He faithfully followed the precepts of justice as tradition decreed. The sole objective of his concern were the devotees of the Lord *Śiva* apart from them, he knew no other loyalty. In spite of this saint’s piety another king named *Muttanāṭaṇ* (முத்தநாதன்) picked a quarrel with him and made war against him. However, again and again *Muttanāṭaṇ* suffered defeat. Knowing *Meyp̥porul nāyaṇār*’s devotion to the devotees of the Lord *Śiva*, *Muttanāṭaṇ* disguised himself by putting the sacred ash and set off to kill *Meyp̥porul*. Although *Muttanāṭaṇ* had intended to take his life, *Meyp̥porul* continued to treat him as the friend of the Lord. By doing so, the king steadfastly followed the path of virtue (PP. 467-490).

¹¹⁹ *Maṅkaiyarkkaraci* is unique among the women. By the grace of the Lord, she dispelled the troubles of that beset the broad Tamil land, and promoted the use of white holy ash. Over many occasions, he guided her king on the saivite path. Finally she was granted grace with him to dwell under the shadow of God’s feet (PP. 4194-4196).

¹²⁰ This saint is a great devotee of the Lord *Śiva*. He would read the facial expressions of *Śiva*’s devotees and understand their needs. He too gains satisfaction in washing the clothes of the devotees of the Lord whenever they come to worship in the temple. One day to test the devotee’s faith the Lord appeared before this saint in the form of a devotee wearing dirty clothes. As usual, the saint offered himself to wash the devotee’s cloth. The devotee expressed his concern that it was the only cloth that was in his possession, therefore, the cloth has to be washed carefully and dried in the sun. He cautioned the saint that: if the washing is delayed, the act of delay would harm his body. So the saint began to wash his clothes. All of a sudden the sun disappeared rain began to fall heavily. The saint was so disappointed, he was weeping with grief. Even he felt guilty and attempted to break his head on the washing stone (PP. 1083-1210).

¹²¹ The significant life story of this saint is narrated extensively in the chapter 3 of the thesis.

¹²² For all the *nāyaṇmār* and the various strata of life they represent, see Appendix I.

particular deity or God.¹²³ In general, ‘the praise of God’ in Tamil literature is divided into two categories: either, it means the author’s salutation to the God whom the author worships¹²⁴ or salutation to the God proper to the subject of that particular work¹²⁵. *Tirukkural*’s praise of *Ādhi Bhagavan* does not fall under any of these divisions; it is ‘neither an invocation nor a mantra. It has neither religious connotation whatsoever in the partisan or sectarian sense’ (Pandian, 1996, p. 56) even though *Parimēlaḷkar*, the thirteenth century commentator of *Tirukkural*, places it into the second category (Senturai Muttu, 1985, p. 107). In the *Periya Purāṇam* the ‘praise of God’ occurs to honour the divine guidance of *Śiva* in the composition of the book (PP. 1).¹²⁶

The reference to the *Ādhi Bhagavan* (ஆதி பகவன்) as the meta-phenomenon that transcends any human categorization, religion or devotion is unique. Here the reference to *Ādhi Bhagavan* is so general and universal in character that it does not specifically refer to any particular concept of a God in specific religion. The sublime thoughts expressed therein lay the foundation for the betterment of humanity and affirm an implicit trust in the higher quality of human life. This first chapter of *Tirukkural* does not propose any significant modes of worship of *Ādhi Bhagavan*’s majesty imploring divine help; instead, it portrays qualities that are attributed to *Ādhi Bhagavan* as ideals to be

¹²³ ‘அகர முதல எழுத்தெல்லாம் ஆதி பகவன் முதற்கே உலகு’ (குறள் 1:1). ‘All alphabets start with ‘Aa’ sound, likewise, the whole universe originates from the Almighty, ADHI BHAGAVAN, the Supreme as its beginning’ (Kural 1:1). All *Tirukkural* texts are from Ambrosia of *Tirukkural* and abbreviated as *kuṛaḷ*.

¹²⁴ The salutation is usually paid to the author’s *kuladevatā* and following are the examples: *Viṣṇu for Vaiṣṇavas*, *Śiva for Śaivas*.

¹²⁵ For example Rāma for the Rāmayaṇa, Kṛṣṇa for the Mahābhārata and the Bhagavāta Purāṇa.

¹²⁶ உலகெலாம் உணர்ந்து ஓதற்கு அரியவன்
நிலவு உலாவிய நீர்மலி வேணியன்
அலகுஇல் சோதியன் அம்பலத்து ஆடுவான்
மலர்சிலம்பு அடி வாழ்த்தி வணங்குவாம்’ (பெ.பு. 1).

‘In all the worlds, no one can comprehend or tell his greatness. In his mattered hair he holds the river Ganges and the crescent moon. He shines the brightest of all heavenly lights, and dances in the sacred court. His are the flower feet, circled with anklets, which we worship and adore’ (PP. 1).

achieved in human life. Hence, the search for virtue and moral fulfilment, whatever be the channel along which it is directed, culminates in the ultimate finding of heavenly bliss (*Kural* 25: 242)¹²⁷. Thus, even though, the first chapter of the *Tirukkural* is in ‘praise of God’, more than deifying a particular, personal God of a particular religion, it exalts in the qualities of the *Adhi Bhagavan* as that which is universal and that which gives meaning and significance to human existence.

Significant is the fact, that in the first chapter of the *Tirukkural*, the ineffability of the ‘primordial deity’ is articulated by the use of language as a metaphor. Just as the letter ‘A’ in the alphabet, stands as the first and the primary letter of the alphabet and gives vitality to the other letters in the alphabet, so too the world originates and is given life by God (*Kural* 1:1)¹²⁸. All knowledge and wisdom that are gained through the uttering and studying of words are of no avail, if they do not lead one to contemplate the feet of God, who is ‘pure intelligence’ (*Kural* 1:2)¹²⁹. This objective is said to be beyond the awareness of dualism and the understanding that is gained through learning. As a word, ‘S/He’ is the beginning, the primordial and the end of all that is uttered and spoken. Those who desire to be free from the ocean of birth have to embrace the feet (*aṭi*: அடி) of God (*Iraivan*: இறைவன்) (*Kural* 1:10).¹³⁰

¹²⁷ ‘நல்லாற்றான் நாடி யருளாள்க பல்லாற்றால் தேரினும் அஃதே துணை’ (குறள். 25:242)

‘A person should practise mercy by following the correct path; at it is seen by studying the teachings of all religions that only mercy leads to heaven’ (Tiru. 25:242). Here mercy is referred to as one of the cardinal virtues that lead to the heavenly bliss.

¹²⁸ ‘அகர முதல எழுத்தெல்லாம் ஆதி பகவன் முதற்கே உலகு’ (குறள். 1:1). ‘All alphabets start with ‘Aa’ sound, likewise, the whole universe originates from the Almighty, ADHI BHAGAVAN, the Supreme as its beginning’ (*Kural* 1:1)

¹²⁹ ‘கற்றதனால் ஆய பயனென்கொல் வாலறிவன நற்றாள் தொழாஅர் எனின்’ (குறள். 1:2). ‘The wise man must worship the Almighty who is the source of all knowledge, otherwise his wisdom is useless’ (*Kural* 1:2).

¹³⁰ ‘பிறவிப் பெருங்கடல் நீந்துவர் நீந்தார் இறைவன் அடிசேரா தார்’ (குறள். 1:10).

The reference to God as ‘*Iraivan*’ (இறைவன்) is also quite significant. The word ‘*Iraivan*’ (இறைவன்) has a plethora of meaning. Hart points out that the word *iraivan* is used as an epithet to denote ‘he who is highest’, ‘Lord’, and ‘king’ (1975, p13). The word ‘*Iraivan*’ (இறைவன்) is derived from the word *iru* (இரு), which means to ‘remain, dwell in’ (*taṅkal* : தங்கள்). It also denotes ‘primacy’ or ‘superiority’ (முதன்மை: *muthanmai*) of an entity. In this way the word ‘*Iraivan*’ (இறைவன்) is used to mean something of ‘superior’ ‘dwelling in all beings’ denoting the presence of something of ‘superior’ in all being (*‘ellāp poruḷṇum taṅkiyiruppavan*: எல்லாப் பொருளிலும் தங்கியிருப்பவன்). It is evident in that the author of the *Tirukkural* wants to emphasise that those who follow the path of virtue and that ‘those who shelter at the feet (*aṭi*: அடி) of the almighty [who is the supreme virtue] who dwells in the innermost recesses of their heart, live forever in him’ (Kural 1:3)¹³¹.

As in the *Tirukkural*, the objective of *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* is to reach and attain the ‘divine feet’ of God through service and moral living. In the introduction to the book, *Cēkkiḷār* states that ‘His are the flower feet, which *nāyaṇmār* worship and honour’ (PP. 1)¹³². The mystical quest of the *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* and their true purpose in life is found in the worship of the golden feet of the Lord (PP. 2).¹³³ It is for this reason *Cēkkiḷār* frequently refers to the Tamil saints as *aṭiyār*

‘Nobody can cross the vast sea of births unless he embraces the feet of God’ (Kural 1:10).

¹³¹ ‘மலர்மிசை ஏகினான் மாண்டி சேர்ந்தார் நிலமிசை நீடுவாழ் வார்’ (குறள் 1:3). Here the word *malarmicaī ikinan* (மலர்மிசை ஏகினான்) refers to the Lord who speedily enters the human hearts. The word ‘flower’ (*malar*: மலர்) is used as a metaphor for heart or mind (*ullam* : உள்ளம்). The second line of the verse, ‘[they] will live long upon the land (*nilamicaī nituvalvar*: நிலமிசை நீடுவாழ் வார்)’ to mean simply, ‘they will live long, trouble-free lives on earth.’

¹³² ‘மலர்சிலம்பு அடி வாழ்த்தி வணங்குவாம்’ (பெ.பு.1). ‘His are the flower feet, circled with anklets, which we worship and adore’ (PP. 1).

¹³³ ‘...மா நடம்செய் வரதர்பொன் தாள்தொழ’ (பெ.பு.2).

(அடியார்), from the root *aṭi* (அடி) meaning foot. They are the ones who have taken refuge at the feet of the Lord, as his servant, one who has placed his head at the feet of the Lord. Hence, *Cēkḱilār* notes, those who worship his feet will flourish and are worthy to rule the world (PP. 139).¹³⁴ The feet of the Lord are referred to as limitless treasures (PP. 2326)¹³⁵; the very essence of all knowledge (PP. 3668),¹³⁶ source of bondage and release (PP. 300),¹³⁷ grace and benevolence (PP. 274),¹³⁸ and pursuit of the feet is the noble path (PP. 4164).¹³⁹ It must be mentioned here, at this stage, for *Cēkḱilār*, the feet of the Lord is *Śivam*. However, what is important to the scope of this research are the qualities of goodness that are attributed to *Śivam*, wherein resonates, concepts originating in the *Tirukkural*.

The other couplets of the first chapter of the *Tirukkural* speak of the ‘primordial deity’ (*Ādi Bhagavan*: ஆதி பகவான்) as the encompassing foundation of human living.

‘... in the worship of his golden feet, birth in this body ... finds its true purpose’ (PP. 2).

¹³⁴ ‘அகிலகாரணர் தாள் பணிவார்கள்தாம்
ஆகில லோகமும் ஆளற்கு உரியர் என்று’... (பெ.பு.139).

‘These devotees who worship the feet of the creator, alone are worthy to rule the world’ (PP.139).

¹³⁵ ‘அநதம் இல்பொருள் ஆவன ஆவடுதுறை உள்
எந்தையார் அடித்தலங்கள் அன்றோ எனமுந்தார்...’ (பெ.பு.2326)

‘Are not the feet of our Father ... limitless treasure in themselves?’ (PP. 2326).

¹³⁶ ‘...தெள்ளி வடித்து அறிந்த பொருள்
சிவன் கழலில் செறிவு என்றே...’ (பெ.பு.3668).

‘He had reached the conclusion that attachment to the feet of *Śiva* was the essence of all knowledge.’

¹³⁷ ‘பந்தம் வீடுத ரும்பர மன்கழல்
சிந்தை ஆரவம் உன்னும் என்சிந்தையை’ (பெ.பு. 300).

‘It is the feet of the Lord that are the source of bondage and release...’ (PP. 300).

¹³⁸ ‘... நாள் கமலப் பதம் தந்தது இன்று
நாயினேனைப் பொருள் ஆக என்றார்’ (பெ.பு. 274).

‘Is it not your grace ... [that] enabled me to attain your feet?’ (PP. 274).

¹³⁹ ‘...தருக்கிய ஐம்பொறி அடக்கி
மற்று அவர்தம் தாள்வணங்கி
ஒருங்கினை நெஞ்சுஉடையார்க்கே
அணித்துஆகும் உயர்நெறியே’ (பெ.பு.4164).

‘They have subdued their five proud senses ... and offer worship at his feet. Theirs is the noble path.’

The nature of God is elucidated as ‘source of all knowledge’ (Kural 1:2)¹⁴⁰, ‘void of desire and aversion’ (Kural 1:4)¹⁴¹, ‘one who has destroyed the five desires of the senses’ (Kural 1: 6)¹⁴², ‘beyond compassion’ (Kural 1:7)¹⁴³, ‘sea of virtue’ (Kural 1:8)¹⁴⁴ and ‘embodiment of character’ (Kural 1: 9)¹⁴⁵. The reference to ‘primordial deity’ as that which has conquered the five senses does seem unique and anthropocentric. The chapter succinctly portrays the characteristics of the ‘primordial deity’ quite clearly. Most important of all is the portrayal of God as the embodiment or seat of all virtues. A person who has realized the feet of God, who is the seat of virtue, would abide all these virtues. This indicates that among the three objectives of life, the most significant is being virtuous because God encompasses all virtues. In the *Periya Purāṇam*, Śiva is referred to as the Lord of all virtue (PP. 135)¹⁴⁶ and a great ocean of virtue (PP. 218).¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁰ ‘கற்றதனால் ஆய பயனென்கொல் வாலறிவான் நற்றாள் தொழார் எனின்’ (குறள். 1:2). ‘The wise man must worship the Almighty who is the source of all knowledge; otherwise his wisdom is useless’ (Kural 1:2).

¹⁴¹ ‘வேண்டுதல் வேண்டாமை இலாண்டி சேர்ந்தார்க்கு யாண்டும் இடும்பை இல்’ (குறள்.1:4). ‘Those who are attached to the feet of Him who is desire-less and who has no hatred, shall never face disaster which is bound to the cycle of births’ (Kural. 1:4).

¹⁴² ‘பொறிவாயில் ஐந்தவித்தான் பொய்தீர் ஒழுக்க நெறிநின்றார் நீடுவாழ் வார்’ (குறள். 1:6). ‘Those shall long prosper who abide in the faultless way of him who has destroyed the five desires of the senses’ (Kural 1:6).

¹⁴³ ‘தனக்குவமை இல்லாதான் தாள்சேர்ந்தார்க் கல்லால் மனக்கவலை மாற்றல் அரித’ (குறள். 1:7). ‘Those who take protection in the Lord, who has no peers, will be freed from the suffering of wordly life’ (Kural 1:7).

¹⁴⁴ ‘அறவாழி அந்தணன் தாள்சேர்ந்தார்க் கல்லால் பிறவாழி நீந்தல் அரிது’ (குறள். 1:8). ‘The wealthy man and the sensual man cannot cross the stormy sea of life unless they bind themselves to the feet of the Lord who is sea of virtue’ (Kural 1:8).

¹⁴⁵ ‘கோளில் பொறியின் குணமில்வே எண்குணத்தான் தாளை வணங்காத் தலை’ (குறள். 1:9). ‘Those who do not bow down to worship the almighty who is the embodiment of character, is like a mind which is sick and does not function properly’ (Kural 1:9).

¹⁴⁶ ‘...அனையதனுக்கு அகமலர் ஆம் அறவான் பூங்கோளில்’ (பெ.பு. 135). ‘The Lord of all virtue is pleased to dwell at ancient *Tiruvārūr* ...’ (PP. 135)

¹⁴⁷ ‘...குணப்பெருங்கடலை நாயேன் யாதினை அறிந்துஎன் சொல்லிப் பாடுகேன் எனமொழிந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 218).

‘... I know nothing of the ocean of your virtues’ (PP. 218).

Besides these, there are other references where the *Periya Purāṇam* is indebted to the *Tirukkural*. Even though these matters may not carry a direct impact on this research, key points can be noted in brief. Clearly, *Cēkkiḷār* has used several quotes from the corresponding couplets of the *Tirukkural*. This may be demonstrated by the following example: the v. 1986 of the *Periya Purāṇam* emphasises that ‘to the devotee who are impelled by spiritual maturity to reach him, the Lord riding on the bull with his consort who shares his body, grant the peerlessly strong currents of the sea of transmigration’¹⁴⁸. This resonates with the couplet of the *Tirukkural* 1:10 which states ‘no one can cross the vast sea of the births unless he embraces the feet of the Lord’¹⁴⁹. On another occasion in v. 881 of the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkkiḷār* sings that ‘by the grace of the ... Lord ... his wife who could command even the descent of rain.’¹⁵⁰ In this, one hears the echoes of the *Tirukkural* 6:55 which states ‘the wife worships no other God but her husband, and by her mere utterance it will rain’.¹⁵¹ Only one who is familiar with *Tirukkural* will be able to recognise that it is a direct quote.

What is worth noting for the purpose of this study is that, though *Cēkkiḷār* and *Tiruvalluvar*, were two men who lived in a world set apart by socio-political, cultural and religious environment, they show a keen perception of Tamil society of their own times, their deep concern for the struggling masses of their time and their agreement on the high

¹⁴⁸ ‘அணைவுற வந்துளமும் அறிவுதொடங்கின அடியார்பால்
இணைஇல் பவம்கிளர் கடல்கள் இகத்திட இருதாளின்
புணைஅருள் அங்கணர் பொருவிடை தங்கிய புணர்பாகத்
துணையோடு அணைந்தணர் சருதிதொடர்ந்த பெருந்தோணி’ (பெ.பு 1986).

¹⁴⁹ ‘பிறவிப் பெருங்கடல் நீந்துவர் நீந்தார் இறைவன் அடிசேரா தார்’ (குறள் 1:10).

¹⁵⁰ ‘குழைக்கு அலையும் வடிகாதிற் கூந்தனார் அருளாலே
மழைக்கு உதவும் பெருங்கற்பின் மனைக்கிழத்தியார்...’ (பெ.பு. 881)

¹⁵¹ ‘தெய்வம் தொழாஅள் கொழுநன் தொழுதெழுவாள்
பெய்யெனப் பெய்யும் மழை’ (குறள் 6:55).

ideals of human life, justice, virtue and service and their mystical quest for meaning in the ordinariness of human living. But *Cēkḱilār's* mastery lies not only in the literary standards and moral integrity achieved in the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam* but also in the integration of the literary conventions set in Tamil literary traditions and the moral exhortation of the *Tirukkural*, and the profound devotion to *Śiva* as expressed in *Tirumurai*. The next section will examine the influence of the *Tirumurai* in the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam*.

2.4 The Mystical Quest and the Devotional Culture of the *Tirumurai*

The third literary genre of significance which preceded the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam* are the devotional poetry of Tamil saints which were later compiled as the 'mystical and canonical works of *Saiva* tradition' (Manninezath, 1993, p. xvi) i.e. *Tirumurai* (திருமுறை) or 'Sacred Order'. They hold the prosaic expressions of the *nāyaṇmār's* devotional experiences, whose biographies are narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam*. These hymns of the *nāyaṇmār*, written and sung in praise of *Śiva* on various occasions 'represent the spiritual excellence of *Śaivism* at best' (Bose, 1998, p. 147), they are 'extremely rich in lyrical poetry, theology, and historical legend' (Farquhar, 1984, p. 255). *Tirumurai* is venerated as 'the primary scripture (*marai*: மறை)' of Tamil *Śaivism* (Peterson, 1991, p.15).

As a sacred compendium, the *Tirumurai*, was discovered and edited between the eleventh and twelfth centuries after the Common Era. The argument regarding the discovery and the compilation of the entire compendium of the *Tirumurai* vary among

the scholars. While Marr (1979, p. 118-119) and Farquhar (1984, p. 256) give credit to *Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi* (நம்பியாண்டார் நம்பி) for the formation of the larger body of Tamil *Saiva* canon who lived in the reign of *Rajaraja Abhaya Kulasekara Cōla* of the tenth century (A.C.E 985-1018), Peterson gives credit to *Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi* only for compiling the first seven of twelve books of *Tirumurai* (1991, p.16). Their discussion is based on the confusion regarding the identity of the *Cōla* king who induced *Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi* to compile the hymns¹⁵². However, it is the canonization of the *Periya Purāṇam* in the later part of the twelfth century which forms the twelfth anthology of *Tirumurai* that completes the entire compendium. The entire work of the *Tirumurai* is a ‘canonical collection of Tamil religious literature’ (Ebert, 2006, p. 221); it is referred to as *Panniru Tirumurai* (*Panniru*: பன்னிரு i.e. Twelve; *Tirumurai*: திருமுறை i.e. ‘Sacred Order’) or a collection of Twelve Holy Texts. Zvelebil points to ‘its enormity, its heterogeneity, and the fact that it covers a period of at least 600 years of religious, philosophical and literary development’ (1973, p. 186) are the three characteristic features of this body of literature. It is a work of spiritual wisdom and devotion that inform the *Saiva* religiosity perhaps more pointedly than any other work in Tamil *Saivism*.

The first seven of the twelve books of the *Tirumurai* are known as *Tēvāram* (தேவாரம்) or ‘Divine Garland of Praises’ addressed to *Śiva* implying that devotion is the ‘string’ on which the numerous ‘flowers’ meaning verses are strung. *Tēvāram* comprises the hymns of *Tiruñāṇacampantar* (திருஞானசம்பந்தர்) (ca. 637 A.C.E – 653 A.C. E) whose hymns are placed as the first three books of *Tirumurai*, while the hymns of his

¹⁵² For the discussion of the identity of the king who induced *Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi* to compile the hymns, see Zvelebil, 1975, pp. 133-134.

contemporary *Tirunāvukkaracar* (திருநாவுக்கரசர்), otherwise known as *Appar* (அப்பர்) (ca. 574 A.C.E – 655 A.C.E), formed the fourth, fifth and the sixth anthologies of *Tēvāram*. The seventh book of *Tēvāram* comprises the seven series of hymns of *Cuntaramūrtti* (சுந்தரமூர்த்தி) (ca. 807 A.C.E – 825 A.C.E) who's *Tiruttonṭar Tokai* (திருத்தொண்டிதொகை) or the 'Roll of the Holy Servants' is the primary source material for the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam*¹⁵³. The biographical information it contained was an important source for the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam*. The works of *Manikkavacakar* (மாணிக்கவாசகர்) (ca. 850) that include *Tiruvācakam* (திருவாசகம்) or 'Holy Readings' and *Tirukkovai* (திருக்கோவை) or 'Holy Works of Order' are placed as the eight book of the *Tirumurai*. The collection of the metaphysical hymns of nine poets known as *Tiruisaippā* (திருயிசைப்பா) or 'Holy Hymns' forms the ninth book of the *Tirumurai*.

These nine anthologies of *Tirumurai* are categorized as *sothiram* (சோஸ்திரம்) meaning 'Hymns of Praise' for *Śiva*. The tenth collection of the *Tirumurai* is the mystical poems of *Tirumūlar's* (திருமுலர்) (ca. 200) *Tirumandiram* (திருமந்திரம்) or 'Holy Invocation'; it is categorized as *sāsthiram* (சாஸ்திரம்) meaning the philosophical guidelines of *Śaiva* doctrine. The eleventh book of the *Tirumurai* includes the various compositions on the *nāyaṇmār*, including that of *Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi's Tiruttonṭar Tiruvandadi* (திருத்தொண்டர் திருவந்தாதி) which lists the names of the *nāyaṇmār*. By the time the *Periya Purāṇam* was composed, there was in existence the first eleven books of the twelve *Tirumurai*. They formed the basis not only for Tamil devotional culture,

¹⁵³ The significance of these *Tēvāram* poets together with the brief description of their lives is dealt in Chapter 3.

inspiring Tamil devotional literature, but also proved very significant for the exposition of the *Periya Purāṇam*. As a work of literature, that recalls the lives of the *nāyaṇmār*, the *Periya Purāṇam* ‘embodies the hagiographical traditions of the *Tēvāram* poets and the circumstances of the individual poem’s composition’ (Shulman, 1990, p. xxii). The *Periya Purāṇam* was later added to the corpus as the twelfth anthology of the *Tirumurai* in order to complete the entire canon.

In the prelude to his hagiography in ‘terms of history and spiritual autobiography’ (Peterson, 1994, p.199) *Cēkkiḷār* writes that he uses *Tiruttoṇṭar Tokai* (திருத்தொண்டர் தொகை) of *Cuntaramūrtti nāyaṇār* of the eight century, which included details on the lives of the *nāyaṇmār*, and *Tiruttoṇṭar Tiruvandadi* (திருத்தொண்டர் திருவந்தாதி) of *Nampi Āṇṭār Nambi* (நம்பியாண்டார் நம்பி) of the tenth century, which are part of *Tirumurai*, as his direct sources for the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 48-50, 4234).¹⁵⁴ *Tiruttoṇṭar Tokai* is an eleven canto poem in the *Tirumurai* VII, *patikam* (பதிகம்) 9¹⁵⁵; it is the first collective record of information on the *nāyaṇmār* with their names, to appear in Tamil history. In it, *Cuntaramūrtti*, lists all the *nāyaṇmār* with just a brief descriptive word about each of them, and declares himself to the servant (*aṭiyēṇ*: அடியேன்) of each one. The circumstance that led to the composition of this poem of eleven stanzas, each of eight lines on the *nāyaṇmār* is described by *Cēkkiḷār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 491-501). As a ‘Roll of the Holy Servants’, the *Tiruttoṇṭar Tokai* lists

¹⁵⁴ ‘மற்று இதற்குப் பதிகம் வன்தொண்டர்தாம்
புற்றிடத்துளம் புராணர் அருளினால்
சொற்ற மெய்த்திருத் தொண்டத் தொகைஎனப்
பெற்ற நற்பதிகம் தொழப் பெற்றதாம்’ (பெ.பு 48).

‘The Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord is the principal source of this present work. Its author was *Nampi* ...’ (PP. 48).

¹⁵⁵ *Patikam* (பதிகம்) is poem in praise of a deity consisting generally of ten stanzas. For *Tiruttoṇṭar Tokai* (திருத்தொண்டர் தொகை), see Appendix II.

mystics and devotees drawn from various stages in the life and status of society who inspired a culture of devotion in the Tamil tradition. This, not only ‘serves to illuminate in an authentic, concrete manner the sense of community that informs the poet-saint’s devotion’ (Peterson, 1991, p. 322), but also as Iyenger suggests make a ‘world wonderfully held together and sustained by devotion’ and of the ‘unfailing ambience of divine grace’ (Vanmikanathan, 1985, p. xvi).

Cēkkiḷār faithfully follows the *Tiruttonṭar Tokai* in terms of its structure, chapter division, and chapter title¹⁵⁶ and in the order of listing the lives of the saints (Marr, 1979, p. 271). The order in which *Cēkkiḷār* presents the *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* follows exactly the order in which *Cuntarar* presents them in the *Tiruttonṭar Tokai* from beginning to the end. Each of *Periya Purāṇam*’s chapter divisions, except for first and the last, includes precisely the same lives as the equivalent stanza in the *Tiruttonṭar Tokai*. For example, in the second chapter, where the correspondence between the two begins, *Cēkkiḷār* includes the six *nāyaṇmār* who are listed in the first stanza of *Tiruttonṭar Tokai*. It is also true of the chapter titles where for each chapter from II to XII, *Cēkkiḷār* has taken the opening words from the corresponding stanza of *Tiruttonṭar Tokai*. However, besides his commitment to the path of devotion manifested in the *nāyaṇmār*’s service and moral living *Cēkkiḷār* adds detailed information drawn from Tamil tradition, culture describing the beauty of the Tamil land. This makes *Periya Purāṇam* an original work composed by *Cēkkiḷār* not mere elaboration of the primary sources.

¹⁵⁶ For the structure of the *Periya Purāṇam*, see Appendix III.

The constant usage of the refrain ‘*atyārkkum atyēṇ*’ (அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்) or ‘I am the servant of you, the servant of the Lord’ of the *Tiruttonṭar Tokai* at the end of every narrative, is also a most important element that had an impact on *Cēkkiḷār*. The word *atyēṇ* (அடியேன்), derived from the root of *ati* (அடி) meaning the lowly or submissive, signifies one who had taken refuge in the grace of God. Thus, the constant repetition of the refrain ‘*atyārkkum atyēṇ*’ (PP. 930)¹⁵⁷ is an example of the devotion of *Cēkkiḷār* to the work of the *Tiruttonṭar Tokai*. Every one of the *nāyaṇmār* who are worshipped in the *Tiruttonṭar Tokai* is again adored in the *Tiruttonṭar Tiruvandadi* or ‘Garland of Verses on the Holy Servants’ of *Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi*; this is in the eleventh *Tirumurai*, in eighty nine quatrains which is fuller than *Tiruttonṭar Tokai*, with one whole stanza is dedicated to each saint. However, *Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi* adds *Cuntarar* who composed *Tiruttonṭar Tokai* and his parents to the list of his *Tiruttonṭar Tiruvandadi* formulating the popularly known canonical list of the sixty three *nāyaṇmār* with a brief description of their legend. *Cēkkiḷār*’s reference to *Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi* (PP. 50)¹⁵⁸, *Kāraikkal Ammaiyaṇ* (PP. 1721-1787) and *Aiyaṭkal* (PP. 4051- 4059) whose hymns are included in the eleventh *Tirumurai*, indicate that the entire collection of the *Tirumurai* proved decisive in the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam* and its mysticism of service and morality.

¹⁵⁷ ‘... அந்நிலை கேட்ட தொண்டர்
அடிஇணை தொழுது வாழ்த்தி...’ (பெ.பு 930).
‘... Now I worship his feet, ...’ (PP 930).

¹⁵⁸ ‘...அலகுஇல் சீர்நம்பி ஆருரர் பாடிய
நிலவு தொண்டர்தம் கூட்டம் நிறைந்த உறை...’ (பெ.பு. 50)
‘...the famous poet to *Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi* sang the eternal praise of the servants...’ (PP. 50)

Apart from the *Tiruttonṭar Tokai* and *Tiruttonṭar Tiruvandadi* which inspired the *Periya Purāṇam*, the anthology of *Tirumurai* as a ‘Tamil religious literature’ (Ebert, 2006, p. 221) embodies a vision of life that became integral to the devotion as shown in the *Periya Purāṇam*. This vision of life, proposed the possibility of a devotion to Śiva. It propagated *aṇṇpu* (அன்பு) or love as the basis of the religious life and the expression of it as highest form of religious activity. The propagation of this religion of love in the vernacular language brought the Śaivite religion closer to the heart of the Tamil tradition. The *nāyaṇmār* inspired this devotion by drawing on a complexity of sources and elements from Vedic¹⁵⁹, Āgamic¹⁶⁰, Purāṇic¹⁶¹ traditions and integrating these with local Tamil mythologies. Nowhere is this amalgam of different traditions in promotion of this religion of love or *aṇṇpu* more poignantly celebrated than in the hymns of *Tēvāram*:

He is of the empyrean, see Him!
 He is far above the celestials, see Him!
 He became Sanskrit of the North and the Southern Tamil
 And the four Vedas; see Him!
 He bathes in *Pañcakavvīyam*, see Him!
 He is the sage, see Him!
 He is the forester who holds fire in his hand and dance; see Him!
 He graced the forester, see Him!
 He is honey that springs from the lotus-hearts of those of him, See Him!
 He is the wealthy one of unattainable treasure, see Him!

¹⁵⁹ The Vedas are considered as the divine manifestation of the eternal word i.e. *vāk*. Their origin is ‘non-human authorship’ (*apauruṣya*). Therefore, they are hailed as revealed text or *Śruti* that which is ‘seen’, ‘heard’ and ‘communicated’ by the ancient *ṛṣis* or teachers. They are different from *Smṛti* texts which are ‘remembered’ by tradition by teachers. The Vedas are four: the *Rg-Veda* (collection of mantras), *Sāma-Veda* (collection of liturgical melodies), *Yajur-Veda* (collection of sacrificial formulas for rituals) and *Atharva-Veda* (magical mantras and spells). These corpuses of the Vedas are further categorized into *Samtās* (classification of mantras), *Brahmanas* (sacrificial text), *Āraṇyakas* (forest treatises) and Upanishads (philosophical text). For study of revelation and of the Vedas in Hinduism, see Staal, 2008, pp. 51-185.

¹⁶⁰ The *Āgamas* is an authoritative scripture believed to have ‘come down to us’ (Dasgupta, 1955, p. 96) as a tradition or spiritual teachings independent of Vedas. They contain practical ‘religious details of the cult of Śaivism’ (Dasgupta, 1955, p. 20), guidelines for religious and social activities, manual for temple constructions and image-making, philosophical treatises on cosmology and ontology, various mantras and mythologies.

¹⁶¹ They are mythological works of ancient history that contains narratives, chronologies, genealogies and stories of gods and kings.

He is *Śiva*, see Him!
He is the opulent on of *Śivapuram*! (Tēv. 6.087.1).¹⁶²

The hymn to *Śiva* was sung by *Tirunāvukkaracar* at a shrine at *Śivapuram* (சிவபுரம்). His songs of devotion are often composed in moments of devotional encounter with *Śiva* particularly at temples and shrines he visited. *Cēkkiḷār* narrates many of these moments that gave birth to such hymns of the *nāyaṇār* and how *Śiva* hearing the sweetness of such hymns conferred the name ‘*nāvukkaracar*’ (நாவுக்கரசர்) on the *nāyaṇār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 1344)¹⁶³. Such hymns of devotion which sprung from their encounter with *Śiva* not only exemplify devotion but also articulate a vision of life that the *nāyaṇmār* intended to articulate through their devotion.

The first stanza of the poem is almost an imperative from the poet that one must ‘see Him! (காண் : *kāṇ*) i.e. *Śiva*. In the following stanzas in the poem, the *nāyaṇār* makes a sequence of identifications, by which he embeds *Śiva* within certain elements of the universe. The *nāyaṇār* insist that one must ‘see Him’ who became the languages of the religious scriptures – both in pan-Indian religious language of Sanskrit and local

¹⁶² ‘வானவன்காண் வானவர்க்கும் மேலா னான்கான்!
வடமொழியுந் தென்றமிழும் மறைகள் நான்கும்!
ஆனவன்கான் ஆனைந்து மாடி னான்காண்!
ஐயன்காண் கையிலன லேந்தி யாடுங்!
குானவன்காண் கானவனுக் கருள்செய் தான் காண்!
கருதுவார் இதயத்துக் கமலத் தூறுந்!
தேனவன்காண் சென்றடையாச் செல்வன்றான்காண்!
சிவனவன்காண் சிவபுரத்தெஞ் செல்வன்றானே’ (தேவ. 6.087.1)

In the citation while the first number - the Roman - refers to *Tirumurai*, the second and third number - the Arabic - refers to the *Patikam* i.e. the chapter and the hymn number.

¹⁶³ ‘மேவுற்ற இவ்வேலையில் நீடியசீர்
வீரட்டம் அமாந்த பிரான் அருளால்
பாஉற்று அலர்செந்தமிழ் இன் சொல் வளப்
பதிகத் தொடை பாடிய பான்மையினால்
நாவுக்கரசு என்று உலகு ஏழினும் நின்...’ (பெ.பு 1344).

‘At the moment, the Lord who dwells in *Tiruvīraṭṭāṇam*, a voice was heard from among the clouds of heaven. “Because you have sung garlands of sweet Tamil hymns, throughout the seven worlds you shall be known by the name ‘*Nāvukkaracu*’ (PP. 1344).

Tamil ('He became Sanskrit of the North and the Southern Tamil And the four Vedas; see Him! – 'வடமொழியுந் தென்றமிழும் மறைகள் நான்கும்' : *vatamolīyunth tāntamiḷum maraikal nākum*). Elsewhere, *nāyaṇār* identifies *Śiva* as 'the sage' (ஆனவன்: *Ānavan*), 'one who holds fire in his hand and dance' ('ஐயன்காண் கையிலன லேந்தி யாடுங்: *iyankān kaiyilena lānti yātung*) and 'blesses the hunter saint' ('ஞானவன்காண் கானவனுக் கருள்செய் தான்' : *kunvankān kānavanukkaruḷcei tān*) whose life is narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 650-835)¹⁶⁴. According to the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Śiva* marvelled at the hunter saint's devotion to sacrifice his own eyes to substitute it for *Śiva*'s bleeding eyes, He granted him the blessings to remain in *Śiva*'s right hand forever. So a lowly 'hunter' becomes a devotional paradigm for other devotees of *Śiva*. In this way the *nāyaṇār* asserts *Śiva*'s all-pervasiveness and presence in the world. However, the emphasis that *Śiva* 'becoming the southern Tamil' (தென்றமிழும் மறைகள் நான்கும் : *tāntamiḷum maraikal nākum*) 'introduces [the idea of] a universal godhead into the Tamil ethos' (Champakalakshmi, 2007, p. 50). This is a phenomenon which significantly alters the Tamil tradition in terms of religion and culture and shaped the theology of *Cēkkiḷār* as presented in the *Periya Purāṇam*. *Cēkkiḷār* too, as the *nāyaṇār*, affirms the presence of *Śiva* in the realities of the world and states *Śiva* as the Lord of the Vedas (PP. 101)¹⁶⁵. *Śiva* is the innermost essence of everything in the universe.

¹⁶⁴ For the life story of this *nāyaṇār*, see p. 50.

¹⁶⁵ 'பொங்கு மாமறைப் புற்று இடம் கொண்டவர் எங்கும் ஆகி இருந்தவர் பூசனைக்கு அங்கண் வேண்டும் நிபந்தம் ஆராய்ந்துளான் துங்க ஆகமம் சொன்ன முறைமையால்' (பெ.பு. 101).

'According to the rules laid down in the ancient texts, he made proper provision for the worship of the Lord of the Vedas, who is present everywhere yet deigns to dwell in the ant-hill' (PP 101).

One significant iconic portrayal of *Śiva* in the hymn, is *Śiva* as the ‘dancer’ (அடிநிர் :*āṭum*). This visual representation of *Śiva* is crucial to the understanding of the devotion as expressed in *Tirumurai*. It is rich in significance from aesthetic and theological point of view. *Śiva* makes himself present in anthropomorphic form as the ‘Lord of Dance’ in early temples and manifests his divine presence in diverse ways. It also explains how *nāyaṇmār* knitted Vedic, *Purāṇic* and *Āgamic* legends and myths in a theological exposition of *Śiva* and inspire *aṇpu* or love in union to Him in the local culture. In the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkkilār* follows the standards set in the *Tirumurai* by drawing on elements of Vedic, *Purāṇic* and *Āgamic* sources to blend his vision of devotion. This could be cited from the narration of the life of *Kaṇṇappar nāyaṇār* (PP. 650-835), a hunter, who was ignorant of scripture but became an emblem of devotion and service. *Kaṇṇappar nāyaṇār*’s adoration of *Śiva* in the forms of *liṅga*-stone¹⁶⁶ is an example of how the earliest modes of worship were reformulated in a new devotional setting of the *Tirumurai* so as to instil a deeper meaning to life and to motivate a personal relationship with *Śiva*. Likewise, in the devotion of *Cākkiyar nāyaṇār* (PP. 3641-3648)¹⁶⁷ who threw pebbles as offerings of worship at *Śiva-liṅga*, the strength of mind displayed by *Kaliyar*

¹⁶⁶ For the study of various myths in traditions, see Shulman, 1980; Peterson, 1991; O’Flaherty, 1975. One example of such myths which appear consistently in *nāyaṇmār*’s song is *Śiva*’s manifestation in *liṅga*: as Brahman and *Viṣṇu* were in a debate as to prove who was the Supreme one and the source of all things. At that moment, *Śiva* manifested himself as *liṅga* of light, which stretched from the bottom of the ocean to high above the heavens, revealing his infinity and light of knowledge. As Brahman and *Viṣṇu*, puzzled by the splendour of the sight, began to find the beginning and the end of the *liṅga* of light. *Viṣṇu* took the form of a swan and flew upwards, while Brahman went deep in search for the bottom of the *liṅga* of light as the boar and failing in their quest worshipped *Śiva* as the *liṅga* of light, the Supreme Lord of all. The myth was used to introduce belief in *Śiva* as the Supreme Lord of all.

¹⁶⁷ It is narrated that this *nāyaṇār* happily threw stones at the *Śiva* lingam with deliberate intent, and finally attained the feet of the Lord which free us from all ills. The *nāyaṇār* made it a daily rule not to eat until he had worshipped the lingam. So one day when he saw a *Śiva* lingam on open ground nearby, he was overjoyed. Beside himself with excitement, he picked up a stone and threw it at the lingam. Then one day, the devotee sat down to eat forgetting his usual custom. Realizing the mistake he had made, at once he got up, left his food and hurried off in love and longing mingled with anxiety, possessed by the single thought of reaching the Lord’s presence and there picking up a stone to throw at him. At that moment the Lord looked kindly upon him and granted him a share in the bliss of his realm with the devotees of former times.

nāyaṇār (PP. 4017-4043)¹⁶⁸ who would cut his throat to keep the temple lamp burning must be examined in the light of the foreground of *Purāṇic* and *Āgamic* practices and *Cēkkiḷār*'s discursive intimacy with the *Tirumurai*.

However, for the *nāyaṇār*, as noted in the ninth stanza of the poem under investigation, *Śiva* is the 'honey that springs from the lotus-hearts of those of him' and therefore one must see Him easily in the 'lotus-hearts of those of him' (கருதுவார் இதயத்துக் கமலத் தூறுந் : *karutuvār itayatuk kamalat turuth*). *Śiva* becomes accessible to those who seek Him. *Cēkkiḷār* too expresses the same sentiments when he notes '...forever he abides in the hearts of the devotees' (PP. 555)¹⁶⁹. He who is 'inaccessible to Viṣṇu and Brahman is easily accessible to His devotees' (PP. 1414)¹⁷⁰. The devotee's heart is infused with *Śiva*'s presence, and becomes the reliable locus for seeing Him.

As a means of strengthening their religious ideal, the vision of realizing *Śiva* who is accessible to all, the *nāyaṇmār* proposed *aṇṇu* (அன்பு) or love as a way to the Lord. This cultivated an inner attitude of reverence and gratitude that was manifested in an outward expression in songs, as a medium of direct communion with *Śiva*. This religious devotion combined with the *Caṅkam* literary conventions, inspired themes of love often fed into hymns that originated not only a novel 'poetry of connections' (Ramanujan, 1981, p. 166) but also a poetry of communion where the *nāyaṇmār* aspired to 'See *Śiva*'.

¹⁶⁸ For the life story of this *nāyaṇār*, see p. 50.

¹⁶⁹ '...துன்னிய அன்பின் மிக்க தொண்டர் தம் சிந்தை நீங்கா அந்நிலை அரனார் வாழ்வது' (பெ.பு 555).

¹⁷⁰ 'அரிஅயனுக்கு அரியானை அடியவர்க்கு எளியானை ...' (பெ.பு.1414).

In order to popularize the ideology of love or devotion, the *nāyaṇmār* became peripatetic singers as they wandered from place to place and temple to temple singing the praises of *Śiva* in poetry. Their ‘conceptual orientation to pilgrimage’ made ‘pilgrimage as metaphor and motif’ (Peterson, 1982, p. 69) so as to affirm temples as the visible signs, which embody and mediate the vision of life. They exposed ethical, mythological, mystical and metaphysical aspects of *Śiva*’s cosmic and meta-cosmic presence in a holistic way through teachings and benevolent activities. The inner movement of their *Śiva* experience, which sprung-up on their journeys to shrines and sacred places, the contradictions and controversies encountered, and conversations and miracles performed, not only created the context for a spontaneous outpouring of their ‘songs of experience’ (Culter, 1987) but also because of the sacredness attached to the places they visited ‘helped to create a *Śaiva* sacred geography’ (Olson, 2004, p. 632).

The pilgrimages that the *nāyaṇmār* made unified ‘the population and the land on a common religious platform’ (Olson, 2004, p. 632) in terms of ‘sacred geography’ and language, as their songs were sung in Tamil. This gave a new cultural identity promoting ‘a self-conscious affection for the [Tamil] culture and the sacredness of its language’ (Olson, 2004, p. 632). They redefined their religious ideologies in terms of devotion and religious living. In them as Peterson relates ‘we encounter a poetic iconography in which selection of details is governed not by the canons of temple sculpture but by the aesthetic of devotion’ (1991, p. 96).

In the sacred narrative of the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkkiḷār* focuses on the aspect of pilgrimage and temple worship in recollecting the lives of *Tiruñāṇacampantar nāyaṇār* (PP. 1904-3159) and *Tirunāvukkaracar* (PP. 1271-1699). In doing so, *Cēkkiḷār* cites authentic incidences related to their journeys, which forged historical, social and religious settings to the composition of various poems in the *Tēvāram* collections. *Cēkkiḷār* too, as did the *nāyaṇmār* sees pilgrimage and temple worship as an integral component of mysticism service and moral living. In *Cēkkiḷār*'s perception, through pilgrimage the *nāyaṇmār* grew into the love of *Śiva*. Their pilgrimages made places sacred and oriented their lives to *Śiva*. Above all, they inspired and instilled faith by promoting human interaction and service. *Cēkkiḷār* presents this image in his hagiography: 'The Lord is all things. He is without form, and yet has form. He is the bridegroom of *Umā* of fragrant hair, and loves to dwell at *Tiruvārūr*. Those born there, perform service which goes beyond all human comprehension ... they having quelled their five senses and endowed with integrated consciousness concentrate their mind upon a single point and offer worship at his feet. Theirs is the noble path' to follow' (PP. 4163 - 4164)¹⁷¹.

2.5 Summary

This chapter provided evidence to show how *Cēkkiḷār*, the author of the *Periya Purāṇam* closely linked to the Tamil literary tradition, both in subject matter and literary genre, in order to formulate his ideal of *Śaiva* religiosity in the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam*. It shows that the study of the *Periya Purāṇam* necessitates an examination of

¹⁷¹ 'அருஆகி உருஆகி அனைத்துக்கும் ஆய்நின்றபிரான்
மருஆரும் குழல்உமையாள் மணவாளன் மகிழ்ந்தருளும்.
திருஆருப் பிறந்தார்கள் திருத்தொண்டு தெரிந்து உணர்...
தருக்கிய ஐம்பொறி அடக்கி மற்று அவர்தம் தாள்வணங்கி
ஒருங்கினை நெஞ்சுஉடையார்க்கே
அணிந்துஆகும் உயர்நெறியே' (பெ.பு 4163-4164).

its preceding literary history. This chapter points out that the aspiration to have communion with the ‘sacred power’ *aṇaṇku* in *Caṇkam* literature played an important role in shaping the manifestation of devotion in service and of moral living in the *Periya Purāṇam*. It demonstrated that the experience of this ‘sacred power’ manifested in the world was expressed in poetry. Though most of their poems were woven around the themes of love and heroism or spoken in terms of the literary genre of *akam* and *puram*, these literary works reflected the life of an ordinary people and gave importance and significance to things spiritual over material. Moreover, they set precedence to the lives of the *nāyaṇmār*’s religious expression.

Of all the literature that appeared in the post-*Caṇkam* era, the *Tirukkural*, a treatise on morality had a significant appeal to the Tamils. The *Tirukkural* was a moral treatise in the literary form of axioms, that contained a philosophy of merit that could be gained by the virtuous living of the three objectives of life – *aram* (ethics of family life), *poruḷ* (ethics of wealth) and *inpam* (ethics of love). The proper pursuit of these details would lead one to the fourth called *vītu* i.e. liberation. It demonstrated that the influence of this moral text on the *Periya Purāṇam* cannot be dismissed as it makes a concerted effort to relate itself to the Tamil Saiva tradition.

The post-*Caṇkam* age is significant in terms of the appearance of much of the devotional literature. This devotional literature initiated a great change in Tamil literature, as it introduced a form of worship to a personal God *Śiva*. The hymns sung in praise of *Śiva* were collected and edited into a Tamil devotional poetry known as the

Tirumurai. The *Tirumurai* saw the evolution of Tamil *Śaiva* canonical literature. It included hymns in praise of *Śiva*, philosophical treatise concerning the *Śaiva* tradition and hagiographical information about the itinerant singers. Hence, the life of the poet-singer who propagated this faith was also sung in reverence, which in turn formed the basis for the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam*. It proves that the *Periya Purāṇam* did not originate without purpose: ‘it is a complex and sophisticated narrative in dialogue with a wide range of genres and sectarian traditions’ (Monius, 2004a, p. 166). *Cēkkiḷār* utilized the diversity of conventions already established in the Tamil literary tradition, in his composition to inspire devotion to *Śiva* and to formulate his own ideal of devotion. How *Cēkkiḷār* goes beyond these issues of interpolation and genre to formulate his vision of religiosity will be addressed in later chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MYSTICAL QUEST OF THE EARLY TAMIL NĀYAṆMĀR

3.1 Introduction

The chapter focuses on the mystical quest of the early Tamil *nāyaṇmār*, whose devotion to *Śiva* had a great influence on *Cēkkiḷār*. While *Cēkkiḷār* was enriched by their insights, he went further in his interpretation and understanding of their devotional service and of moral living. In fact, in the introduction to his work, *Cēkkiḷār* highlighted the inspiration that he gained from the lives of *nāyaṇmār*. *Cēkkiḷār* was not only aware of this, but acknowledges it the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 49)¹⁷².

As indicated in the verses, it is certainly clear, that *Cēkkiḷār* closely followed the *nāyaṇmār*, who embodied a life of devotion manifested in their service and moral living. Subsequently, in the very next section of the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkkiār* begins his narration with the life story of *Cuntaramūrtti nāyaṇār*, whose life was the basis for the entire narration of the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 27-29, 147-349, 3140-3374, 3752-3927, 4234-4286). It was around him that the lives of the other *nāyaṇmār* and especially two of ‘three masters’ or ‘*mūvar mutalikal*’ (மூவர் முதலிகள்) (Peterson, 1991, p. 269) of the *Tirumurai* i.e. *Tirunāvukkaracar* (PP. 1271-1699) and *Tiruñāṇacampantar* (PP. 1904-3159) are narrated. The life of *Tirumūlar nāyaṇār* (PP. 3569-3596) and of *Kāraikkāl ammaiṇār* (PP. 1722-1787) together with a host of other *nāyaṇmār* is also recalled within

¹⁷² ‘அந்த மெய்ய பதிகத்து அடியார்களை
நந்தம் நாதன் ஆம் நம்பியாண்டார் நம்பி
புந்தி ஆர்ப் புகன்ற வகையினால்
வந்தவாறு வழாமல் இயம்புவாம்’ (பெ.பு. 49).

‘The divine servants who are venerated and listed with inner delight and divine grace by *Nampi Āṇṭār*
Nampi Our leader - is for the good of the world. We shall follow his work closely’ (PP. 49).

the *Periya Purāṇam*. It is clear beyond doubt that *Cēkkiḷār* was not only influenced but was greatly charmed by the lives of the *nāyaṇmār*. This chapter will address how *Cēkkiḷār* imbibed the mystical quest of the *Tirumūlar nāyaṇār* and the ‘three masters’; they are significant exponents of Tamil *Śaivism* upon which *Cēkkiḷār* was able to base and formulate his own vision of devotion and mysticism¹⁷³. The chapter is therefore divided into four parts:

3.2 The Mystical Quest of *Tirumūlar Nāyaṇār*

3.3 The Mystical Quest of *Tiruñāṇacampantar Nāyaṇār*

3.4 The Mystical Quest of *Tirunāvukkaracar Nāyaṇār*

3.5 The Mystical Quest of *Cuntaramūtti Nāyaṇār*

3.6 Summary

3.2 The Mystical Quest of *Tirumūlar Nāyaṇār*

Among the *nāyaṇār* who had a profound influence on *Cēkkiḷār* and whose life story is narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam* is *Tirumūlar* (திருமுலர்) *nāyaṇār*. He is thought to have lived between the fourth and sixth centuries¹⁷⁴. As a poet, he is considered as a *Cittar* (சித்தர்)¹⁷⁵ or ‘God realized being’ (Ganapathy, 1997, p. 232) who has attained this perfection through divine light (*oḷi*:ஒளி), power (*cacti*: சக்தி) and *yōgic* practices (TM

¹⁷³ The *Periya Purāṇam* is the saga of the sixty-three *nāyaṇār* or servitors of the Lord, who not only lived for Him but adored Him in delightfully distinct ways. However, *Cēkkiḷār* narrates extensively on four of the sixty-three *nāyaṇār* i.e. *Tirumūlar Nāyaṇār*, *Tiruñāṇacampantar Nāyaṇār*, *Tirunāvukkaracar Nāyaṇār* and *Cuntaramūtti Nāyaṇār*. For the reason, it is their poems of *Śiva* that forms the first seven of the twelve books Tamil *Śaiva* scripture. It is important to study their poems of *Śiva* and the influence they had on *Cēkkiḷār*. It is, therefore, this chapter focuses on four of the most important saints of Tamil *Śaivism*.

¹⁷⁴ There is considerable debate about the exact dating of *Tirumūlar*. Scholars such as Narayana Aiyar ascribe 6th century A.C.E as the actual period in which he lived (1974, p. 209). For Zvelebil the period is 7th century A.C.E (1974, p. 55); for Farquhar it is 8th century (1984, p. 93).

¹⁷⁵ The Tamil literary tradition associates the origin of the *cittar* tradition to *Tirumūlar*. As Zvelebil notes, he is ‘undoubtedly one of the direct and one of the most influential forerunners’ of *cittar* tradition (1973, p. 221). A *cittar* is a *yōgi*.

1490)¹⁷⁶. *Cēkkiḷār* recounts *Tirumūlar* as a great ascetic who gained extraordinary powers through *yōgic* practices (PP. 3581)¹⁷⁷ and as a result ‘attained eternal union with the Lord’s feet (PP. 3595)¹⁷⁸. *Cēkkiḷār* notes that *Tirumūlar* received divine injunction to render his work *Tirumantiram* (திருமந்திரம்) or ‘Sacred Utterance’ [*tiru*: திரு i.e. ‘Sacred’ and *mantiram*: மந்திரம் i.e. mantra or utterance meaning ‘Sacred Utterance’] in Tamil (PP. 3591)¹⁷⁹. The work written in an informative style is placed as the tenth book of *Saiva* canonical scriptures i.e. the *Tirumurai*. The Vedic tradition, the *Āgamic* cult and the path of devotion coalesced in *Tirumantiram*, which systematises the metaphysical, ethical and devotional aspects of *Śaivism*. *Cēkkiḷār* claims that the *nāyaṇār* wrote ‘the complete garland of three thousand stanzas in Tamil’ (PP. 3595)¹⁸⁰ and that he shall recount the glorious deeds of *Tirumūlar* who in crystal clear Tamil expounded the noble path of *yōga* and inward realization (PP. 3568, 3596)¹⁸¹.

¹⁷⁶ யோகச் சமாதியின் உள்ளே யகலிடம்
யோகச் சமாதியின் உள்ளே யுளரொளி
யோகச் சமாதியின் உள்ளே யுளசத்தி
யோகச் சமாதி யுகந்தவர் சித்தரே’ (திரு. 1490)

‘In *yōga samadhi* is space infinite; in *yōga samadhi* is light abiding; in *yōga samadhi* is *sakti* omnipotent; They that joy in *yōga samadhi* are verily *Siddhas* great’ (TM. 1490).

¹⁷⁷ ‘இவன்உயிர்பெற்று எழில் அன்றி ஆக்கள் இடர்நீங்கா என்று
அவன் உடலில்தாம் உயிரை அடைவிக்க அருள்புரியும்
தவமுனிவர் தம்உடம்புக்கு அரண்செய்து தாம்முயன்று
பவனவழி அவன்உடலில் தம்உயிரைப் பாய்த்தினர்’ (பெ.பு.3581).

‘Realizing that he could not achieve that unless the herdsman was restored to life, the ascetic left his own body in a safe place, and then transferred his life into the body of the herdsman through the control of his breath perfected by long practice’ (PP. 3581).

¹⁷⁸ ‘...ஒருகாலும் பிரியாமைத்தான் அடைந்தார்’ (பெ.பு.3595).

¹⁷⁹ ‘தண்ணிலவு ஆர்சடையார் தாம் தந்த ஆகம் பொருளை மண்ணின் மிசைத் திருமூலர் வாக்கினால் தமிழ்வுகுப்பக் கண்ணிய...’ (பெ.பு.3591). ‘The Lord who had revealed the sacred scriptures planned *Tirumūlar* should render them in Tamil...’ (PP. 3591).

¹⁸⁰ ‘முன்னிய அப்பொருள் மாலைத் தமிழ் மூவாயிரம் சாத்தி’ (பெ.பு.3595).

¹⁸¹ ‘... உள்உணர்வு ஆன ஞானம் முதலிய ஒருநான்கு உண்மை தெள்ளுதீம் தமிழால் கூறும் திருமூலர் பெருமை செப்ப’ (பெ.பு. 3568).
‘நலம் சிறந்தான யோகக் கிரியை சரிகை எலாம் மலர் மொழித் திருமூல தேவர்...’ (பெ.பு 3596).

Amongst the scriptures that inspired Tamil *Śaiva Siddhāntam*¹⁸², it is in the *Tirumantiram*, that one finds for the first time in concise form, the metaphysical and mystical principles that are central to the theology of *Śaiva Siddhāntam* i.e. *pati* (பதி) or *Śiva*, *pacu* (பசு) or the soul and *pācam*: (பாசம்) or bondage¹⁸³. *Tirumūlar nāyaṇār* describes these principles in a number of verses in the *Tirumantiram* (115, 328, 1577 and 2362 etc.).¹⁸⁴ Of the three principles, in *Tirumantiram*, *Śiva* is portrayed as the ‘creator’ (உலகம் படைக்கும் பொருள்: *ulakam paṭaikkum poruḷ*) (TM. 389), the ‘divine potter’ (குசவனைப் போல்எங்கள் கோன்நந்தி: *kucavaṇaip pōlēṇkaḷ kōṇṇanti*) (TM. 443), ‘effulgent light’ (சோதி: *cōti*) (TM. 1872) and ‘omnipresence’ (பராமயம்: *parāmayam*) (TM. 2076). *Tirumūlar* declares that *Śiva* is:

No female, no male, no neuter,
Is the effulgent light inside the veil of ignorance,
Shining within the core of the discerning mind.
This reality has no eyes but sees, has no ears but hears;
None can gauge this ability of this reality.
Mature souls at the summit of experience have
Investigated this reality’s greatness (TM. 1872)¹⁸⁵.

¹⁸² *Śaiva Siddhāntam* or *Śaiva Siddhānta* in Sanskrit is the final reduction of the philosophical and the theological thoughts of *Śaivite* thinkers. It was systematized as a coherent thought by *Maykandar Karulturai* and his student *Arulnanti* in the 13th century A.C.E. An entire system of thought draws on various elements from *Śaiva Āgamas*, Upanishads, *Tirumurai*, *Meykanda Śāstra* and other ancient Tamil works. See Dhavamony, 1971, pp. 1-7.

¹⁸³ For the influence and relationship of *Tirumūlar* to *Śaiva Siddhāntam*, see Siddalingaih, 1979, pp. 50-51.

¹⁸⁴ ‘பதிபசு பாசம் எனப்பகர் மூன்றில்
புதியினைப் போற்பசு பாசம் அனாதி
புதியினைச் சென்றனு காப்பசு பாசம்
பதியனு கிற்பசு பாசம் நில் லாவே’ (திரு. 115).

‘They speak of the Three - Pati, Pasu and Pasa; Beginningless as Pati, Pasu and Pasa are: But the Pasu-Pasa nears not the Pati supreme: Let but Pati touch! The Pasu-Pasa is as naught’ (TM. 115).

¹⁸⁵ ‘பெண்ணல்ல ஆணல்ல பேடல்ல மூடத்துள்
உள்நின்ற சோதி ஒருவர்க்கு அறியொணாக்
கண்ணின்றிக் காணும் செவியின்றிக் கேட்டிரும்
அண்ணல் பெருமையை ஆய்ந்தது மூப்பே’ (திரு. 1872).

In the first line of the stanza, *Tirumūlar* denies the known categories of male, female and neuter (பெண்ணல்ல ஆணல்ல பேடல்ல: *penṇalla āṇalla pēṭalla*) that are generally attributed to a God. In the very next line he affirms that this totally ‘Other’ reality – the effulgent light of knowledge is trapped inside the veil of ignorance ‘within the core of the intelligent mind’ (உள்ளின்ற சோதி ஒருவர்க்கு அறியொணாக்: *uḷṇinra cōti oruvarkku ariyoṇāk*). Once again he describes, in paradoxical terms that *Śiva* ‘sees and hears without eyes or ears’ (கண்ணின்றிக் காணும் செவியின்றிக் கேட்டிரும்: *kaṇṇinrik kāṇum ceviyinrik kēṭṭirum*). These abilities of *Śiva* cannot be gauged by human comprehension. Yet, by declaring that *Śiva* is accessible to mature souls at the summit of their inner experience, it is in the last line, that *Tirumūlar* implicitly proclaims that *Śiva* can be both religiously experienced and known (அண்ணல் பெருமையை ஆய்ந்தது மூப்பே: *aṇṇal perumaiyai āyntatu mūppē*).

Tirumūlar, furthermore, identifies *Śiva* as *Paraparam* (பராபரம்) i.e. God – the most High.¹⁸⁶ It is He who manifests himself poignantly in the form of dance (ஆடிடும்: *āṭum*), imprinting himself everywhere (TM. 2757).¹⁸⁷ *Tirumūlar* perceives the dance of *Śiva* everywhere. When *Śiva* danced ‘the Vedas danced, the *Āgamas* danced; the

¹⁸⁶ ‘...உடம்புறு சோதியு மாய் உள்ள
பேரும் பராபரன் பிஞ்சுகன் எம்இறை
ஊரும் சகலன் உலப்பிலி தானே’ (திரு. 3045).

‘He is deathless ... spark of light within the body. All these He is; He is *Paraparam*, He is *Śiva* ... He is the walking *Jiva* here below’ (TM 3045).

The word *paraparam* according to Tamil lexicon of the Madras University is used in Tamil to denote i.e. God as the most high, almighty and as a Supreme deity. *Tirumūlar* uses to indicate *Śiva* as God of the most high.

¹⁸⁷ ‘தேவரோடு ஆடித் திருஅம்பலத்து ஆடி
மூவரோடு ஆடி முனிசனத் தோடு ஆடிப்...
கோவினுள் ஆடிடும் கூத்தப் பிரானே’ (திரு. 2757).

He dances with the celestials. He dances in the Holy Temple ...He dances in Jivas. He, the Lord dances (TM. 2757).

melodious danced, and the entire world ...’ (TM. 2729)¹⁸⁸. However, from this outward religious experience the *nāyaṇmār* moves to one of introspection when he sings ‘...the holy *Nandi* that thus danced is verily inside your heart’ (TM. 2781)¹⁸⁹. Therefore, the significance of the dance of *Śiva* is felt profoundly nowhere more immanently than ‘when it is realized that it takes place within the heart and self. Everywhere is God: ... everywhere is the heart’ (Coomaraswamy, 1985, p. 60). Hence the dance of *Śiva* is both a symbol of exterior and interior religious experience, of the wave of movement in the macrocosm to microcosm.

Since *Śiva* dances within the human self, the body is the temple of God (உடம்புளே உத்தன் கோயில்கொண்: *uṭampiḷē uttaṇ kōyilkoṇ*). *Tirumūlar* sings that there were times that he used to despise the body (உடம்பினை முன்னம் இழுக்கென் றிருந்தேன்: *uṭampinai munnam iluken tirunteṇ*). The moment he saw the Lord within, he realized that the body is the Lord’s temple and he began to preserve it (உடம்பினை யானிருந் தோம்புகின் றேனே: *uṭampiṇai yāṇirun tōmpukiṇ ṛēṇē*) (TM. 725)¹⁹⁰. The glory of individual body lies in the realization of presence of *Śiva* in it. The human body becomes the locus of religious experiences and practices: care of the body is a prerequisite for spiritual practices. Therefore most extraordinary power in life is the ability to preserve

¹⁸⁸ ‘வேதங்கள் ஆட மிகுஆ கமம் ஆடக்
கீதங்கள் ஆடக் கிளர்அண்டம் ஏழாடப்
பூதங்கள் ஆடப் புவணம் முழுதாட
நாதம்கொண் டாடினான் ஞானாந்தக் கூத்தே’ (திரு. 2729).

For all the reference to *Tirumantiram*, see Tirumantiram, 1991. It is, from this point, abbreviated as TM. For Texts in Tamil, see Panniru Tirumurai, n.d.

¹⁸⁹ ‘...ஆடிய நந்தி புறம்அகந் தானே’ (திரு. 2781).

¹⁹⁰ ‘உடம்பினை முன்னம் இழுக்கென் றிருந்தேன்
உடம்பினுக் குள்ளே யுறுபொருள் கண்டென்
உடம்புளே உத்தன் கோயில்கொண் டான் என்று
உடம்பினை யானிருந் தோம்புகின் றேனே’ (திரு. 725).

the body and extend life. It is achievable through *yōga* (TM. 715)¹⁹¹. The practice of *yōga* leads one through insights to the seat of bliss in the innermost depth of one's true self. *Tirumūlar* lays great stress on the gravity of inner attitudes of devotees, whereby the heart and mind in unison can be directed to the light of *Śiva* to blossom in love. They shall experience *Śiva* wafted in the core of one's being (TM. 1421)¹⁹². Therefore, in the practice *yōga* devotee's hearts melts into love (TM. 272)¹⁹³ and to the final realization of *Śivam* within. It stresses the inner worship of *Śiva* that disapproves any emotional type of devotion to *Śiva* but could be gained through *yōgic* practices.

It is in such a person *Śiva* enters to have communion (TM. 275)¹⁹⁴. It is because *Śiva* himself is love. For *Tirumūlar* love is not a quality of *Śiva*; love is *Śiva* (அன்பே சிவம்: *anpē Śivam*). Therefore, the liberation of the soul is possible only by the realization of the true nature of *Śiva* as love and love as *Śiva* (TM. 270)¹⁹⁵. This realization of *Śivam*, as love, is a growth in human knowledge (அன்பே சிவமாவது ஆரும்

¹⁹¹ 'புடையொன்றி நின்றிடும் பூதப் பிராணை
முடையொன்றி நின்றிட வாய்த்த வழியுஞ்...
விடையொன்றி லேறிய வீற்றிருந் தானே' (திரு. 715).

'when life breath is coursed up though the single channel of pipe [*Nādi*], Lord appears before you' (TM. 715)

¹⁹² '...முற்பத ஞான முறைமுறை நண்ணியே ...சொற்பத மேவித் துரிசற்று மேலான தற்பரங் கண்டுளோர்' (திரு. 1421). 'Having practiced all *yōga* that have to be ... and so pass into the world of formless sound beyond; and there, rid of all impurities, envision the Supreme wafted in the core of one's being' (TM.1421). The usage of the word *tat param* (தற்பரம்) is quite significant. The word denotes that which is highest in the Tamil.

¹⁹³ '...அன்போடு உருகி அகங்குழை வார்க்கன்றி என்போல் மணியினை எய்தஒண் ணாதே' (திரு. 272). '...but unless your heart melts in the sweet ecstasy of Love, My Lord, my Treasure-trove, you ne'er can be possessed' (TM. 272).

¹⁹⁴ '...அணிசிவன் தானொரு வண்ணம்என் அன்பில்நின் றானே' (திரு.275). '...He sat enthroned in my love, steadfast and free' (TM. 275).

¹⁹⁵ 'அன்பு சிவம் இரண்டு என்பர் அறிவிலார்
அன்பே சிவமாவது ஆரும் அறிகிலார்
அன்பே சிவமாவது ஆரும் அறிந்தபின்
அன்பே சிவமாய் அமர்ந்திருந் தாரே' (திரு. 270).

'The ignorant think that love and God are two; they do not know love is God. After knowing that love of God, they remain possessed of love which is God' (TM. 270).

அறிந்தள்: *aṇpē Śivamāvatu ārum aṛintaḷ*). Here *Tirumūlar* equates love of Śiva with knowledge. It is for this reason it is stated in the poem ‘that the ignorant think that love and God are two’ (அன்பு சிவம் இரண்டு என்பர் அறிவிலார்: *aṇpu Śivam iraṇṭu eṇpar aṛivilār*) (TM. 270). Put it differently, loving Śiva is to know him. The theme of love runs through this entire poem. The goal of life, therefore, is to ‘praise Śiva melting in love, to seek Him melting in love and He will bestow the love of union will grant is the gift of loving him alone’ (TM. 274)¹⁹⁶. For those who trod on this path of love (அன்பொடுருகல்: *aṇpoṭurukal*), Śiva grants his gifts of love of undifferentiated union. *Tirumūlar* understands this love of union as a mystical state, where one gets assimilated into oneness in Śiva (TM. 2182)¹⁹⁷. This realization occurs in human self; the whole of the human being becomes Śiva (TM. 2846)¹⁹⁸. Therefore, for *Tirumūlar*, ‘becoming one with Śiva is the goal of *Vedānta* and *Siddhānta*’ (TM. 2393).¹⁹⁹

Tirumūlar’s appeal to *Vedānta*²⁰⁰ and *Siddhānta* as a central teaching to affirm his religious experience is quite significant. As the first poet to use such expression i.e.

¹⁹⁶ ‘என்அன் புருக்கி இறைவனை ஏத்துமின்
முன்அன் புருக்கி முதல்வனை நாடுமின்
பின்அன் புருக்கிப் பெருந்தகை நந்தியும்
தன்அன் பெனக்கே தலைநின்ற வாறே’ (திரு.274).

¹⁹⁷ ‘...பொய்யான ஆறாறு நீக்கி நெறிநின்றுஒன்று ஆகியே நிற்குமே’ (திரு. 2182).
‘... In the holy way *Jiva* stood, and one with him union attained’.

¹⁹⁸ ‘நாமாம் முதல்வனும் நான்என லாமே’ (திரு. 2846).
‘... the primal one I become, he and I one will be’ (TM. 2846).

¹⁹⁹ ‘சிவமாதல் வேதாந்த சித்தாந்த மாகும்...’ (திரு 2393).

²⁰⁰ The *Vedānta* i.e. Upanishads are a continuation of thought found in the earlier Vedas and *Brahmanas*. They are sacred Hindu texts that are concerned with the perennial search for the essence of existence. *Upanishadic* emphasis is on inwardness and spirituality and the differentiation between the self of the body and that of the true inner self or *Atman*. The word *Vedānta* is a combination of two words: ‘*Veda*’ which means ‘knowledge’ and ‘*anta*’ which means ‘the end of’ or ‘the goal’ of. Thus *Vedānta* means ‘the end of knowledge’. In this context the knowledge is not intellectual – the limited knowledge we acquire by reading books. Here it means the Self knowledge (*Atmavidya*), knowledge of the Absolute Truth (*Brahmavidya*). *Vedānta* teaches the real or essential nature of God, the universe, and the individual being (Self) and its oneness with God. See Flood, 1996, pp. 238-239.

Vedānta Siddhānta, *Tirumūlar* aims to synthesize both *Vedānta* path way to God realization and *Siddhānta* i.e. *Saiva Āgamaic* pathway. In this mystical state, one becomes one with *Śiva* yet without losing identity; indeed both God and the devotee are in a communion of love. Such *yōgic* insights of inner awareness, where the ‘seen’ disappears in the ‘seer’ are glorified in the *Tirumantiram*. *Tirumūlar* himself was one such devotee who attained that oneness, ‘with me and you’ obliterated; who experienced the truth of ‘I’ indeed is ‘You’. It is the highest realisation (TM. 1441)²⁰¹. *Tirumūlar* was thus firmly rooted in the ‘unitive’ experience of becoming one with *Śiva*. His *Tirumantiram* is a Tamil classic which sees the unity of all things in *Śiva*, revealing their inter-links and inter-relationships, interacting in several gradations. This unity of the central theme of the *Tirumantiram* is based on *Āgamic* beliefs and practices on the philosophical level, while not ignoring the metaphysical levels of understanding of the fundamental truths of ‘*Śiva*-experience’ (சிவ அனுபவம்: *Śiva-anupavam*), ‘*Śiva*-knowledge’ (சிவ அறிவு: *Śiva-arivu*) and ‘*Śiva*-bliss’ (சிவ ஆனந்தம்: *Śiva-ānantam*) (TM. 1422)²⁰². This experience of *Tirumūlar* gave a new understanding in terms of worship where even without the knowledge of scripture or temple devotion it is possible that one can have mystical experience of a loving union with *Śiva*.

²⁰¹ ‘நானென்றும் தானென்றும் நாடிநான் சாரவே தானென்று நானென் றிரண்டிலாத் தற்பதந் தானென்று நானென்ற தத்துவ நல்கலால் தானென்று நானென்றுஞ் சாற்றிகில் லேனே’ (திரு.1441). ‘I sought Him in terms of I and You. But, He that knows not I from You. Taught me the truth, "I" indeed is "You". And now I talk not of I and You (TM. 1441).

²⁰² ‘வேதாந்தஞ் சுத்தம் விளங்கிய சித்தாந்த நாதாந்தங் கண்டோர் நடுக்கற்ற காட்சியர் புதாந்த போதாந்த மாதும் புனஞ்செய்ய நாதாந்த பூரணர் ஞானநே யத்தரே’ (திரு. 1442). ‘They who have scaled the heights of Siddhanta are the ones who had learned pure *Vedānta*. They have in truth had the unwavering vision; comprehending who is the inner meaning of life to the finite end of their knowledge, they become perfection in music. Thus they are the real searches of knowledge and experience the supreme bliss who is beyond themselves’ (TM. 1442).

Cēkkiḷār narrates the life of *Tirumūlar* as a symbol to portray the vitality of his devotion and to extol the greatness of *Śiva* (PP. 3564-3591). *Cēkkiḷār* coherently narrates *Tirumūlar* as a non-Tamil speaker, who gets localized in Tamil through transferring his life into the body of a herdsman. His aim was to render the sacred scriptures in Tamil (PP. 3591).²⁰³ *Cēkkiḷār* narrates ‘he lived happily in this world for three thousand years then reached the holy mountain of *Kailāsa* where he attained eternal union with *Śiva* *yōga* (PP. 3595)²⁰⁴. *Cēkkiḷār* exclaims; I pay tribute to the feet of *Tirumūlar* who expounded this noble path (PP. 3596)²⁰⁵. What is remarkable and enduring in *Tirumūlar* devotion i.e. realization of *Śiva* without the aid of institution through observance of strict discipline. *Cēkkiḷār* utilizes the unconventional path of devotion trod by *Tirumūlar* i.e. in his exemplification of devotion of the other *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam*. For example, the narration of *Caṇṭēcurar* who cut off his father’s legs for kicking at his beloved icon *linga* (PP. 1211-1270)²⁰⁶, the story of *Ceruttunai* who cut off a queen’s nose for smelling a flower set aside for the worship of *Śiva* (PP. 4125-4131)²⁰⁷ are set within this unconventional pattern of expressing devotion to *Śiva* primarily expressed by *Tirumūlar*. What is worthy of emphasis is that *Cēkkiḷār* points out that I shall recount the glorious deeds of *Tirumūlar* who in crystal clear Tamil expounded the noble path of *yōga*

²⁰³ ‘தண்ணிலவு ஆர்சடையார் தாம் தந்த ஆகம் பொருளை மண்ணின் மிசைத் திருமூலர் வாக்கினால் தமிழ்வகுப்பக் கண்ணிய...’ (பெ.பு.3591).

²⁰⁴ ‘முன்னிய அப்பொருள் மாலைத் தமிழ் மூவாயிரம் சாத்தி ...

திருக்கயிலை தன்னில் அணைந்த ஒருகாலும் பிரியாமைத்தாள் அடைந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 3588).

²⁰⁵ ‘நலம் சிறந்தான யோகக் கிரியை சரியை எலாம் மலர்ந்த மொழித் திருமூல தேவர் மலர்கழல் வணங்கி...’ (பெ.பு. 3596).

²⁰⁶ For brief narration of the life of this *nāyaṇār*, see p. 145.

²⁰⁷ This *nāyaṇār* was well known as a *Saivite* truly devoted to the feet of the Lord, and was faithful in the path of service. This devotee used to perform notable acts of service in the court of the Lord’s temple at *Tiruvārūr*, which was thronged with gods and sages, and to offer worship at regular hours. In that way he enhanced the reputation of the Lord’s service. One day, the famous queen of *Pallava* king *Singar* picked up a flower which had fallen to the ground in the hall of flowers, and smelt it. When he saw this, *Ceruttunai* came rushing up with a bright sword in his hand. He seized the queen by her dark hair, pulled her to the ground and took hold of her nose and cut off the queen’s nose with his sword. Like a mighty lion among the devotees, he performed this act of service for all to see (PP. 4125-4131).

and inward realization (PP. 3568, 3596)²⁰⁸. It is clear that the *yōgic* path that is trodden by *Tirumūlar* had an effect of *Cēkkiḷār*.

3.3 The Mystical Quest of *Tiruñāṇa Campantar Nāyaṇār*

As we have stated, if *Tirumūlar* can be considered the foundation of the *Śaivism* as a religio-philosophical system, ‘the ‘three masters’ or ‘*mūvar mutalikal*’ (மூவர் முதலிகள்), that is *Tiruñāṇa Campantar*, *Tiruvāvukkaracar*, *Cuntaramūrtti*, are recognised as its pillars. One cannot undermine their legacy which had an impact on *Cēkkiḷār*. Among them *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* (திருஞானசம்பந்தர்), also known as *Campantar* (சம்பந்தர்), is a pre-eminent *nāyaṇār* of *Śiva*, as his devotional hymns constitutes the first three books of the twelve *Tirumurai*. Most of his hymns appear to have been uttered impromptu when he visited shrines propagating a devotion to *Śiva*. All the hymns are said to contain the distilled essence of the Vedas and are militant in spirit. *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* is given the pride of place, as *Cēkkiḷār* narrates the entire history of him in the *Periya Purāṇam*. His life story that begins in the sixth chapter, occupies a considerable space in the narration of the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 1904-3159). *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* or the one who is ‘imbued with divine wisdom’ belongs to the first half of the seventh century (637 A.C.E – 653 A.C.E).

It is recounted in the *Periya Purāṇam*, that *Campantar* as a child frequently accompanied his father to the temple and, on one such occasion, his father left him on the steps of the sacred tank while he himself descended for a bath. Being hungry the child

²⁰⁸

‘... உள்உணர்வு ஆன ஞானம் முதலிய ஒருநான்கு உண்மை தெள்ளுதீம் தமிழால் கூறும் திருமூலர் பெருமை செப்ப’ (பெ.பு. 3568).

‘நலம் சிறந்தான யோகக் கிரியை சரிகை எலாம் மலர் மொழித் திருமூல தேவர்...’ (பெ.பு. 3596).

started crying, then ‘Śiva recalling how precious the gift of this child ... entrusted to his consort the task of bestowing on the child the divine wisdom...’ (PP. 1968)²⁰⁹. By virtue of this gift the child came to be called ‘the child who is Śiva’s own possession’ (ஆளுடைய பிள்ளையார்) and ‘*jñāṇa Campantar*’ (ஞான சம்பந்தர்) i.e. ‘the one uniquely endowed with divine wisdom’ or ‘He who is related to God through divine knowledge’ (PP. 1972).²¹⁰ With this gift of this knowledge (ஞானப்பால்: *jñāṇappāl*) from Śiva, the child began to sing a decade of praise of Śiva. The entire canon of *Saivism* begins with this song of this child (Tēv. 1.1.1)²¹¹.

It is obvious, the poem begins with symbolic description of Śiva, his ‘riding on the bull’, ‘sacred ashes’, ‘crescent moon’ not only to express the inexpressible potency of Śiva but also to affirm that Śiva who gave the ‘milk of wisdom’ is no other than who lives in *Piramapuram* (பிரமாபுரம்). Then the poet personalises Śiva, by addressing Śiva as ‘Him’ (இவன்: *ivan*) and revealing Śiva as the ‘stealer of hearts’ (உள்ளங்கவர்: *uḷḷaṅkavarār*) indicating the poet’s fondness to Śiva. Everything about Śiva, his conventional description of Śiva as presented in first two stanzas becomes beautiful, attractive, enchanting, because he ‘stole’ the devotees heart. The appeal is through the sense to the soul, from the aesthetic to the spiritual.

²⁰⁹ ‘...தம்பெருமைக் கழல் பேனும் ஒருநெறியால் வருஞானம் கொடுப்பதனுக்கு உடனிருந்த அருமறை ஆளுடையவனை அளித்தருள அருள் செய்வார்’ (திரு. 1968).

²¹⁰ ‘...ஆளுடைய பிள்ளையாராய்...தாவில்தனிச் சிவஞான சம்பந்தர் ஆயினார்’ (பெ.பு. 1972)

²¹¹ ‘தோடுடைய செவியன் விடையேறியோர் தூவெண்மதி சூழக் காடுடையகட லைப்பொடிசின் உள்ளங்கவர் கள்வன் ஏடுடையமல் ரான்முனைநாட்பணிந் தேத்தஅருள் செய்த பீடுடையபிர மாபுரம்மேவிய பெம்மானிவ னன்றே’ (தேவா. 1:1.1)

‘He wears a woman’s earring on one ear; riding on a bull, adorned with spotless white crescent moon, His boy smeared with the ash from the cremation ground. He is the thief who stole my heart. He is the Lord who lives in fine *Piramapuram*, where he once blessed with his grace. Brahmā of the lotus seat Who worshipped him in the distant past’ (Tev. 1.1.1).

Tiruñāṇa Campantar did not concern himself with religious texts – nor did he give learned discourses or expound any philosophy. Instead, the surest response for him is genuine love for *Śiva*. Thus, the words, ‘He is’ the Lord (இவன் அன்றே: *ivaṇ anrē*) not only emphasises poets affection for *Śiva* but also begin the phase of dynamic *Śaivism* as a living way of life with its appeal to realise the goal of human existence. Thus, *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* was initiated in the experiential knowledge of *Śiva* and he began the mission of spreading the excellent truths and practices embodied in the *Saiva* way in Tamil.

As a devotee who followed the *Śaiva* path, *Tiruñāṇa Campantar*, in his songs of praise, repeatedly affirms the primordial nature of *Śiva* when he says that just as the letter ‘a’ (அகரமுதலான: *akaramutalāṇa*) is the first and the most important of the alphabet so is *Śiva* (Tēv. 1.88.5)²¹². Further, in referring to the qualities of *Śiva*, he says:

That it is the end and the only beginning, beyond the two gender differences of male and female, the three guṇās, the four Vedas, the five basic elements, the six tastes, the seven sounds, the eight directions and yet it is the totally other that exists by itself ... (Tēv. I.11.2).²¹³

Thus in single stanza, the mystic, by the usage of the words ‘He is the first being’ (ஈறாய் முதலொன்றாய்: *īrāi mutalonrāi*) affirms the primordial nature of *Śiva*. Then in trying assert the total ‘Otherness’ of the *Śiva*, the poet sings, that He is ‘beyond gender differences’ (இருபெண் ஆண் : *irupeṇ āṇ*), ‘the five basic elements’ (வருபுதம் ஐந்தாய்

²¹² ‘...அகர முதலானை யணியாப்ப னூரானைப் பகரு மனமுடையார் வினபற் றறுப்பாரே’ (தேவ. 1.88.5). ‘...who is the first cause of all things as is the first letter of the tamil alphabet; those who have the mind to sing the praises of *Śivaṇ* in beautiful *āppanūr*’ (Tēv. 1.88.5).

²¹³ ‘ஈறாய்முத லொன்றாயிரு பெண்ணாண்குண மூன்றாய் முறாமறை நான்காய்வரு புதம்மவை யைந்தாய் ஆறார்கவை யேழோசையொ டெட்டுத்திசை தானாய் வேறாயுட னானானிடம் வீழிம்மிழ லையே’ (தேவா. 1.11.2).

: *varuputam aintāi*)²¹⁴ implying that it is from Him all thing have come into existence.

Again, at the end of stanza, the poet affirm the ‘Otherness’ of *Śiva* by noting ‘it is the totally other that exists by itself’ (வேறாய் உடன் அறன் இடம் : *vērāi uṭaṇ araṇ iṭam*).

After affirming the primordial qualities of *Śiva*, *Tirunāṇa Campantar*, sings of everything that he could conceive of attributing to *Śiva* in his poems (Tēv. I.16.6)²¹⁵. In this poem, the poet sings of *Śiva* in a non-personal term when he speaks of *Śiva* as the ‘music’ (இசை: *icai*), ‘shower of rain’ (மழையானவன் : *maḷaiyāṇavan*) and ‘light of the morning sun’ (இளஞாயிறின் சோதி: *iḷaiñāyirīn cōti*). What is more significant in this regard is the conception of *Śiva* in personal term of ‘He’; ‘He is my own’ (என் ஆனவன் : *eṇ āṇavan*). Thus, *Tirunāṇcampantar* brings clarity, not only to the supremacy of the *Śiva* but also to its closeness to his devotees as a personal God.

Tirunāṇa Campantar’s closeness to *Śiva* is so profound and intimate – he address *Śiva* as ‘Mother and Father’ (தாயும் தந்தையும்: *tāyum tantaiyum*) (Tēv. I.50.7). The poet further notes, that *Śiva* as a father and mother is accessible to those who seek him in

²¹⁴ The five great elements are water (*jala*), air/wind (*vayu*), fire (*agni*), earth (*prithvi*) and space (*akasha*). These elements are in fact accepted as the five basic elements or constituents of human body. The five basic elements relate directly to the five senses in order: hearing (ether), touch (wind), sight (fire), taste (water) and smell (earth). See Shiv Sharma, 2003, pp. 35-55.

²¹⁵ ‘மன்னானவ இலகிற்கொரு
மழையானவன் பிழையில்
பொன்னானவன் முதலானவன்
பொழில்கூழ்புள மங்கை
என்னானவ னிசையானவ
இளஞாயிறின் சோதி
அன்னானவ இறையும்மிடம்
ஆலந்துறை யதுவே’ (தேவா. 1.16.6)

He is the king, a shower of rain for the world. Pure Gold, first being. He is my own; He is music, He is like the light of the morning sun ...(Tēv. 1.16.6).

love (Tēv. II.150.3).²¹⁶ It points to the fact that *Tiruñāṇa Campantar*'s approach to *Śiva* or the attitude of the approach to *Śiva*, is an attitude of son to *Śiva*. It is *Śiva* himself conferred this role on *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* the very moment he entrusted to his consort the task of bestowing on the child the divine wisdom. At the very moment *Śiva* accepted His role of fond parent. The *nāyaṇar*'s early pilgrimages and his movements from shrine resembled very closely the faltering and tottering steps which a child just learning to walk would take. This loving parental solitude was to be manifested very remarkably in the *nāyaṇar*'s life till the end of his life. *Cēkkiḷār* recounts this in the *Periya Purāṇam* 'when the Lord saw the child chanting from Veda clapping with his hands, He bestowed on the child a pair of golden cymbals' (PP. 2001).²¹⁷ It is obvious *Tiruñāṇa Campantar*'s approach to *Śiva* could be characterised by the acts of intimate service to God, such those that a son may render to his father, with the intimate goal of attaining the nearness of God. *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* always sings of the Lord *Śiva* with filial feelings of a son.

The profound influence of *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* on *Cēkkiḷār* cannot be underestimated, as we have seen in the introductory notes in this section; *Cēkkiḷār* devoted an entire section to *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* entitled *Tiruñāṇa Campantar purāṇam* in the sixth chapter of the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 1904-3159). The highest regard *Cēkkiḷār* gives to *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* cannot be in any doubt. Thus *Cēkkiḷār* sings his praises in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 1904)²¹⁸.

²¹⁶ 'தாயானே தந்தையு மாகிய தன்மைகள்
ஆயானே யாயநல் லன்பர்க் கணியானே...' (தேவா. 11.150.3).

²¹⁷ 'கை அதனால் ஒத்து அறுத்துப் பாடுதலும்
கண்டருளிக் கருணை கூர்ந்த ... செம்பொன் தாளங்கள் ... கைத்தலத்து வந்த அன்றே'
(பெ.பு. 2006).

²¹⁸ 'வேதநெறி தழைத்து ஓங்க மிகுசைவத்துறை விளங்கப்
பூதபரம் பரைபொலியப் புனிதவாய் மலர்ந்தழுத

In the other verse of his narration, *Cēkṣiḷār* recalls *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* as a mystic, as the one who is completely possessed by *Śiva* (PP. 1972).²¹⁹ *Śiva* has gifted *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* with unique divine wisdom which even the ‘gods and sages are not capable of achieving’ (PP. 1972)²²⁰. This true wisdom is the ‘wisdom which breaks the shackles of rebirth, wisdom which is hard to comprehend, the matchless wisdom of the arts and scriptures, and the true wisdom of the Lord *Śiva*’ (PP. 1973)²²¹. *Cēkṣiḷār* like *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* affirms *Śiva* as one who activates all things, and it is those possessed by Him are His true devotees. However, *Cēkṣiḷār* observes, there are some ignorant folks who do not hold these truths and go their own way. It is to deliver them from darkness and to impart the true knowledge of *Śiva* that *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* came into the world (PP. 1974).²²² *Cēkṣiḷār* reiterates that the *Śiva-jñānam* (சிவஞானம்) that was bestowed on *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* was an inward experience of bliss and the experience of the infinite *Śiva* which is manifested in different forms (PP. 2064).²²³

It is clear that *Cēkṣiḷār* commended the selfless service and surrender of all the *nāyaṇmār*, while reserving for *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* the crown of *Śiva-jñānam*. The

சீதவள வயல்புகலித் திருஞானசம்பந்தர்

பாதமலர் தலைக்கொண்டு பரவ்வாம்’ (பெ.பு. 1904).

For the Vedic pathway to prosper, In them, for the *Śaivite* way to splendour,

For the good of all the generation, Cried in pure sublime verse,

The one who hails from the fertile land of *Pukali*. Let us begin to narrate the essence of

His sacred service by placing our heads On the feet of *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* (PP. 1904)

²¹⁹ ‘...ஆளுடைய பிள்ளையாராய்...தாவுஇல்தனிச் சிவஞான சம்பந்தர் ஆயினார்’ (பெ.பு. 1972).

²²⁰ ‘... தேவருக்கும் முனிவருக்கும் தெரிவுஅரிய பொருள்...’ (பெ.பு.1972).

²²¹ ‘சிவன்அடியே சிந்திக்கும் திருப்பெருகு சிவஞானம்

பவம் அதனை அறமாற்றும் பாங்கினில் ஓங்கிய ஞானம்

உவமைஇலாக் கலைஞானம் உணர்வு அரியமெய்ஞ்ஞானம்

தவம் முதல்வர் சம்பந்தர் தாம் உணர்ந்தார் அந்நிலையில்’ (பெ.பு.1973).

²²² ‘எப்பொருளும் ஆக்குவான் ஈசனே எனும் உணர்வும்

அப்பொருள்தான் ஆளுடையார் அடியார்கள்எனும் அறிவும்

இப்படியால் இதுஅன்றித் தம் இசைவு கொண்டு இயலும்

துப்புரவுஇல்லார் துணிவுதுகள் ஆகச் சூழ்ந்து எழுந்தார்...’ (பெ.பு.1974).

²²³ ““You have bestowed upon me the inward experience of bliss, endless and divine”, he cried, “it has come in visible form, easy to apprehend with the senses”” (PP. 2064).

supreme knowledge of *Śiva* that filled the core of his life as a result of his constant contemplation of the invincible power of *Śiva*'s *arul* (அருள்)²²⁴; or favours symbolised by the lotus feet of Him, to the exculsion of all the other preoccupations (PP. 2326-2327)²²⁵. It is this awareness that led *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* to carry his service – *tiruthoṇṭu* (திருத்தொண்டு). In order to amplify the exemplariness of *Tiruñāṇa*

²²⁴ The Tamil word *arul* (அருள்) which has been frequently used by *Cēkkiḷār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* to mean all that *Śiva* undertakes. *Cēkkiḷār* uses the term to demonstrate, for instance, love, benevolence, favor, generosity that *Śiva* has for His devotees. The Tamil Lexicon of the University of Madras categorizes *arul* as meaning 'to be gracious to' (கிருபைசெய்தல் : *kirupaiceyatal*), 'to favor', 'to rejoice' (மகிழ்தல்: *makīḻtal*), 'to speak graciously' (தயவுடன் சொல்லுதல்: *tayavutaṇ collutal*), 'to command' (உத்தரவுசெய்தல்: *uttaravuceyatal*), 'to grant, bestow' (அளித்தல்: *aḷittal*). Its ostensible complementary terms are defined as 'grace' or 'favor' (கருணை: *karuṇai*), 'good deeds' (நல்வினை: *nalviṇai*), 'command' and 'order' (ஏவல் : *ēval*). The etymology of the term *arul* (அருள்) is rather problematic. Don Handelman and David Shulman observe this difficulty of tracing the etymology of the term *arul* (அருள்) (2004, p. 41). George Hart identifies the root of the noun *arul* (அருள்) as stemming from the verbal root *ār* (ஆர்) i.e. 'to become full' (நிறைதல்: *niraital*), 'to spread over' (பரவுதல்: *paravutal*), 'to abide' (தங்குதல்: *taṅkutal*), 'to wear' (அணிதல் : *aṇital*). The syllable *ul* (உல்) is used as a suffix to construct a noun from a verb (1975, p. 27). Thus, the term should be *ārul* (ஆருள்); however, the loss of the long vowel 'A' (ஆ) is puzzling and problematic as the word is customarily used as *arul* (அருள்) rather than *ārul* (ஆருள்). The complexity of the term's theological tinge has forced a standardized translation into English that has the leaning to misinterpret the concept. That translation is 'grace'. David Shulman and Don Handelman observes this exercise to equate and translate this complex and 'critical' term, often as 'grace' with its heavy Christian implication (2004, p. 40). However, O'Meara points out, the confusion is not so much the with the term 'grace' –though it carries its own nuances – it is the standardized identification of *arul* (அருள்) with a single term 'grace'. Though, the term 'grace' in Christian theological usage carry different meanings; however, it is also used to indicate the presence of the divine, its activity and reality. It should be noted that in this study, the term grace which is loaded with philosophical and theological nuances is used in the latter sense to mean the presence of the divine, its activity and reality. This translation, however, is a bit unformulated because it presupposes a *Śaiva* theological structure to the concept. Given the nature of this study, it is difficult to translate all the nuances of a religious perspective in a single term, let alone divine activity of intention, the *Śaiva* authors themselves do not present a coherent presentation of the term *arul* free from contradiction. The Christian notion of grace too has changed overtime, presenting a complexity of ideas in different historical periods and interpreters. Thus, if we keep this fact at the background, understanding *arul* as 'grace' generally should be less troublesome. The interest here is to show how *Cēkkiḷār* used the term to *arul*, referred in this study to demonstrate, for instance, love, benevolence, favor, generosity that *Śiva* has for His devotees rather than elucidating the agreement and contradictions in the theological system of a particular *Śaiva* tradition. For discussion on the notion of 'grace', see O'Meara, 2005, pp. 3644-3648. For the elaboration of this concept of grace in the *Periya Purāṇam*, see Chapter 5, pp. 161-164.

²²⁵ 'தந்தையார் மொழிகேட்டலும் புகலியார் தலைவர் முந்தைநாளில் மொழிந்தமை நிறைந்து அருள்முன்னி அந்தம் இல்பொருள் ஆவன ஆவடுதுறை உள் எந்தையார் அடித்தலங்கள் அன்றோ எனஎழுந்தார்'. சென்று தேவர்தம்பிரான் மகிழ்கோயில் முன்பு எய்தி நின்று போற்றுவார் நீள்நிதி வேண்டினார்க்கு ஈவது ஒன்று மற்றுஇலேன் உன்அடி அல்லது ஒன்று அறியேன் என்று அருள்வினவிய செந்தமிழ் எடுத்தார்' (பெ.பு. 2326-2327).

'On hearing his father's request, the chief of Pukali remembered their previous conversation. "Are not the feet of our Father, Lord of Āvaṭuturai, and limitless treasure in themselves?" he reflected. With that thought, he went into the temple and standing before the divine presence praised the ruler of the gods in a Tamil hymn, "When my father asks me for huge sums of money," he sang, "I have no resources but your feet." In these words, he was in fact addressing a prayer to the Lord for a special gift' (PP. 2326-2327).

Campantar's devotion to *Śiva*, *Cēkkiḷār* gives examples of the transformation in a devotee that the devotional experience of *Śiva-jñānam* brings. They are the threefold experience; the experience of unity in the suffering of other beings; the experience of compassion towards others who are ignorant of the truth; the experience of the presence of the divine i.e. *Śiva*. In narrating the threefold experience through the life of *Tiruñāṇa Campantar*, *Cēkkiḷār* explains that when one is able to experience the suffering of all living beings in oneself, then one has the true experience of the unity of being in oneself. This was demonstrated in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 2214-2230)²²⁶.

From the narration it is clear that the mystical oneness *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* achieved through an attitude of a son to his 'Father' i.e. *Śiva* aided by *Śiva-jñānam* which was bestowed on him led the *nāyaṇmār* to feel one with all the realities bringing joy to the world. Therefore, following the path of *Śiva* means living in his presence. *Cēkkiḷār* cites various examples and descriptions in the narration of the life of the *nāyaṇār*, all of which point clearly to the influence of the devotion of *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* had on *Cēkkiḷār* in elaborating the *nāyaṇmār's* devotional service and of moral living in the *Periya Purāṇam*. And the end of the narration *Cēkkiḷār* sings that he has recounted the

²²⁶ In this section *Cēkkiḷār* narrates first of the few services performed by *Tiruñāṇa Campantar*. It was the sheer compassion which impelled *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* to cure the virgin afflicted with catalepsy. By the power of being a 'divine child', he pleaded with his 'Father' and succeeded in persuading him to respond to his appeal. *Cēkkiḷār* narrates 'to rid the girl of diseases, he sang in Tamil a poem of protest. "This girl is sick ...," he sang, "Is this the doing of the Lord with the jewelled throat?" And if it is, how does that accord with his justice?' (PP. 2221).

‘...பணிவளர் செஞ்சடைப் பாச்சின்மேய பரம்பொருள் ஆயினாரைப் பணிந்து மணிவளர் கண்டரோ மங்கையை வாடாமல் செய்வதோ இவர் மாண்பது என்று தணிவுஇல் பிணிதவிர்க்கும் பதிகத்தண்டமிழ் பாடினார் சண்பை நாதர்’ (பெ.பு. 2221).

history of *Campantar*, the repository of pure Tamil, as I have learnt it at his holy feet (PP. 3159)²²⁷.

3.4 The Mystical Quest of *Tirunāvukkaracar Nāyaṇār*

Another significant proponent of Tamil *Śaivism* who had a significant influence on *Cēkkiḷār* is *Tirunāvukkaracar* (திருநாவுக்கரசர்) or ‘King of Sacred Speech’. He was an older contemporary of *Tiruñāṇa Campantar*. It was by the latter that the former was lovingly called ‘*Appar*’ (அப்பர்) or ‘my Father’ at their very first meeting; since then he has been known by that name²²⁸. He was born in 574 A.C.E died in 655 A.C.E. His composition of the hymns of *Śiva* are placed as the 4th, 5th and 6th of the *Tirumurai* compendium. In *Tirunāvukkaracar*, *Cēkkiḷār* sees a man of intense devotion and service. He notes that this sage and ascetic came into the world that the sacred service of the Lord might prosper (PP. 1266)²²⁹.

Tirunāvukkaracar’s life was full of events. It is paradoxical to understand that this poet who was so totally abosorbed by his vision of *Śiva*, converted to Jainism in his life as a youth and became a master of Jain doctrine being popularly knwon as *Tarumacēṇar* (தர்மசேனர்). *Cēkkiḷār* himself narrates that at the very early age this *nāyaṇār* set him to

²²⁷ ‘அருந்தமிழாகரர் சரிதை அடியேனுக்கு அவர்பாதம் தரும்பரிசால் அறிந்தபடி துதிசெய்தேன்...’ (பெ.பு. 3159).

²²⁸ *Cēkkiḷār* narrates:

‘With deep affection *Tirunāvukkaracar* made obeisance at *Tiruñāṇa Campantar*’s feet. He in turn, invoking the Lord in tears, and addressed *Tirunāvukkaracar* simply as ‘My father’. ‘I am your servant’, *Tirunāvukkaracar* replied’ (PP. 1452).

‘தொழுது அணைவற்று ஆண்ட அரச அன்புடருகத் தொண்டர் குமாத்து இடையே சென்று பழுதுஇல் பெருங்காதலுடன் அடிபணியப் பணிந்து அவர்தம் கரங்கள் பற்றி எழுது அரிய மலர்க்கையால் எடுத்து இறைஞ்சி விடையின் மேல் வருவார் தம்மை அழுது அழைத்துக் கொண்டவர்தாம் அப்பரே என அவரும் அடியேன் என்றார்’ (பெ.பு. 1452)

²²⁹ ‘திருநாவுக்கரசு வளர் திருத்தொண்டின் நெறி வாழ வருஞானத் தவமுனிவர்... (PP. 1271).

practice charity. He established centres where the poor could find lodging and so gain the wide reputation for generosity (PP. 1305)²³⁰. However, through realizing this world is impermanent, he gave up the practise of charity. After years of study of religion to understand which of them the best is, he embraced the Jain religion which forbids the killing of any creatures (PP.1307).²³¹

It must be pointed out that during *Tirunāvukkaracar's* time Jainism had established itself as leading religious faith in *Tamiḻnāṭu* with the support of the *Pallava* kings who had been themselves been won over to that faith. Jainism whose chief doctrine is *ahimsa* – not harming any creature in the least manner – became a proselytizing religious using a method of coercion, including destruction of temples of *Śaivism*.²³² *Tiruñāṇa Campantar's*, whose devotion is presented earlier, father was deeply disturbed in his heart at the state of religious affair in the country prayed *Śiva* to offer him a son who would put an end to the humiliation of *Śaivism* and restore its ancient glory. *Śiva* granted him a son. *Tirunāvukkaracar* came, as a fore-runner to

²³⁰ 'மாகஇல் மனத்துயர் ஒழிய மருள் நீக்கியார் நிரம்பித்
தேசநெறி நிலையாமை கண்டு அறங்கள் செய்வாராய்க்
காசினிமேல் புகழ் விளங்க நிதி அளித்துக் கருணையினால்
ஆசில் அறச் சாலைகளும் தண்ணீர் பந்தரும் அமைப்பார்' (பெ.பு. 1305).

²³¹ 'நில்லாத உலகியல்பு கண்டு நிலையா வாழ்க்கை அல்லேன் என்று அறத்துறந்து
சமயங்கள் ஆனவற்றில் நல்லாறு தெரிந்து உணர் நம்பர் அருளாமையினால்
கொல்லாமை மறைந்து உறையும் அமண்சமயம் குறுகுவார்' (பெ.பு.1307).

²³² *Cēkkiḷār* points to this fact in the narration of *Taṇṭi Aṭkal*. This *nāyaṇār* according to the *Periya Purāṇam* is blind from birth. He used to daily worship at the temple of *Ārūr*. Now beside the tank on the west side of the temple, the Jains were extending their monastic buildings and causing serious congestion. When *Taṇṭi Aṭkal* realized what was happening, he determined to counter it by a digging operation to widen the tank. Immediately the Jains raised uproar saying that digging into the earth would cause the death of many creatures buried in the mud. The saint went up to the gates of the temple, prayed for redress against the shame inflicted on him, went up to his mutt and sank into troubled sleep. Then the Lord appeared to him in the dream and consoled the saint saying: 'do not let your heart give', 'you will receive your eye sight'. Then the saint rose to the surface praising the Lord and gained clear eye-sight and the Jains lost their eye sight (PP. 3597-3621).

Tiruñāṇa Campantar. The misssion was therefore to tour most of the shrines to prepare people.

Tirunāvukkaracar conversion from being a *Samana* (சமன) or Jain was not a consequence of his own deep devotional experience of *Śiva*, it is due to the acts of piety of his sister (PP. 1311)²³³. *Cēkkiḷār* speaks of the several incidents and of trencherous plans of Jain monks to take revenge on *Tirunāvukkaracar* for his desertion (PP. 1351)²³⁴. Many of *Tirunāvukkaracar*'s compositions offer intensely personal reflection on the religious journey that brought him to *Śiva*. They reveal how he has to overcome insurperable obstacles by his pledge of servitude to and unfailing love to the feet of *Śiva* in perfect self-surrender (Tēv. V.072.7)²³⁵. The poems also treat domestic life, the perishable nature of human body, and the pleasure and luxuries of life that hamper the quest to be with *Śiva*. This is witnessed in one of his hymns (Tēv. VI.098.1)²³⁶ which 'has become a kind of battle cry of Tamil *Śaiva bhaktas*' (Zvelebil, 1974, p. 96).

²³³ '...என்னை ஆண்டருளும் நீர் ஆகில் அடியேன் பின் வந்தவனை ஈண்டு வினைப் பரசமயக் குழிநின்றும் எடுத்து ஆள வேண்டும்' (பெ.பு.1316).

²³⁴ '...கொளையும் பொய்மையும் இல என்று கொடுமையே புரிவேர் தலையும் பீலியும் தாழ்வந்து ஒரு சிறை சார்ந்தார்' (பெ.பு.1351)

²³⁵ 'கல்லி னோடெனைப் பூட்டி யமண்கையர் ஒல்லை நீர்புக நூக்கவென் வாக்கினால் நெல்லு நீள்வயல் நீலக் குடியரன் நல்ல நாமம் நவிற்பி உய்ந் தேனன்றே' (Tēv. V.072.7).
'Tying me to a stone column and throwing me into the sea with indecent haste, I chanted with my lips the name of the Lord...' (Tēv. V.072.7).

²³⁶ 'நாமார்க்குங் குடியல்லோம் நமனையஞ்சோம் நரகத்தி லிடர்ப்படோம்நடலை யில்லோம் ஏமாப்போம் பிணியறியோம் பணிவோமல்லோம் இன்பமே யெந்நாளுந் துன்பமில்லை துமார்க்குங் குடியல்லாத் தன்மை யான வங்கரன்நற் சங்கவெண் குழையோர் காதிற் கோமாற்கே நாமென்றும் மீளா ஆளாய்க் கொய்ம்மலர்ச்சே வடிஇணையே குறுகினோம் (தேவா. VI.098.1)

'We are slaves to no man, Nor do we fear death. Hell holds no torments for us, We know no deceit. We rejoice, we are strangers to disease, We bow to none. Joy alone is ours, not sorrow, for we belong forever to *Śankara*, who is the supreme Lord' (Tēv. VI.098.1)

Most of *Tirunāvukkaracar*'s poems generally rejoice in the beauty of *Śiva*. These poems are devotionally charged and bristle with metaphors and symbols calling *Śiva* as 'milk' (பால்: *pāl*) or 'honey' (தேன்: *tēṇ*) (Tēv. VI.024.1)²³⁷. *Śiva* is also spoken of purely in subjective terms, calling Him, 'father', 'mother', 'brother' and 'uncle' (Tēv. VI.095.1)²³⁸; He is of all the things that are loved and treasured in the world. *Tirunāvukkaracar*'s poems reveal that he employed localized form of pan-Hindu myths to affirm the presence of pan-Indian deity *Śiva* in Tamil places as a 'local god'. The appeal to the story of *Śiva* wanderings about for alms is peculiar to Tamil country (Tēv. IV.019.5)²³⁹. Elsewhere, *Tirunāvukkaracar* also uses purely local myths i.e. myths which have no correspondence or versions outside *Tamiḷnāṭu*. A fine example such a local myth with cosmic dimensions is *Śiva*'s reincarnating as devout spider as king *Kōccenkaṭ Cōḷan* (Tēv. IV.046. 3 and 8). *Cēkkiḷār* dedicates whole section to narrate this episode in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 4202-4219)²⁴⁰. Every manifestation is a work of *Śiva*'s love. It is *Śiva*'s love that pours out in abundance in every fulfilment of life.

²³⁷ '... தெரியாத தத்துவனைத் தேனைப் பாலைத்... ' (தேவா. VI.024.1).

²³⁸ 'அப்பன்நீ அம்மைநீ ஐய நும்நீ அன்புடைய மாமனும் மாமி யும்நீ...' (தேவா. VI.095.1).

'To me! Father you are, mother you are, affectionate uncle and aunt you are...' (Tēv. VI.095.1).

²³⁹ 'தாங்கோல வெள்ளெலும்பு பூண்டுதம் மேறேறிப்
பாங்கான வூர்க்கெல்லாம்ஞ் செல்லும் பரமனார்...' (தேவா. IV.095.5).

'Adoring himself with the beautiful white bones riding on a bull which belongs to him, he goes to all the villages that are nearby' (Tēv. IV.19.5). *Śiva* wandering as 'beggar' is a popular icon in Tamil Nadhu. The story of *Śiva* taking this (*Bhikshatana*) depicts Him in an amorous light. It is related that to subdue the arrogance of the sages of the *Daruka* forest, *Śiva* assumes the form of a naked mendicant, and seduces the wives of the sages. The sages fueled by anger rushed to destroy him by sending a deer, a tiger and a snake to kill him but he defeats all of them. The deer he bears on one hand and as for the tiger, he kills it, flays it and wears its skin. The serpent becomes his garland. See Kramrisch, 1981, p. 155.

²⁴⁰ For the story of this *nāyaṇār*, see p. 144.

If *Śiva* is everywhere ‘seeing Him’ in everything is the ultimate significance of human life (Tēv. 6.087.1)²⁴¹. Significantly, one has to ‘see Him’ in one’s mind and heart. This *Śiva* ‘within’ is the God *Tirunāvukkaracar* (Tev. VI.08.5).²⁴² This realization allowed the *nāyaṇār*, who once considered the ‘world as impermanent’ (PP. 1307)²⁴³, to consider birth as a human being is worthwhile (Tēv. IV. 081. 4)²⁴⁴. Appar commands every one of his organs and limbs to worship and adore his God (Tēv. IV.09.1)²⁴⁵.

However, such a search is possible only for the humble and repentant person who begins to acknowledge his or her own ignorance of the true nature of *Śiva* and the cosmic realities (Tēv. IV.079.1).²⁴⁶ *Śiva* will grant his assistance to such a repentant person and remove the veil of ignorance and allow him to possess a true knowledge of Him and of all realities. Therefore, *Tirunāvukkaracar* in many of his hymns implores divine assistance that leads to this profound experience of being united to the *Śiva* (Tēv. IV. 095.6)²⁴⁷. Even before wickedness overpowers him, the Lord in benevolence must

²⁴¹ ‘வானவன்காண் வானவர்க்கும் மேலா னான்கான்!’

‘He is of the empyrean, see Him! He is far above the celestials, see Him!... (Tēv. 6.087.1).

²⁴² ‘மனத்தகத்தான் தலைமோன் வாக்கி னுள்ளான் வாயாரத் தன்னடியே பாடுந் தொண்டர்’ (தே. VI.08.5).

‘... in my mind’s core is He, (with His feet) on my head is He, in speech is He, and in the hearts of the clan of devotees’ (Tēv. VI.08.5).

²⁴³ ‘நில்லாத உலகியல்பு கண்டு நிலையா வாழ்க்கை’ (பெ.பு. 1307)

²⁴⁴ ‘...மனித்தப் பிறவியும் வேண்டுவ தேயிந்த மாநிலத்தே’ (தேவா. IV. 081.4).

‘...even birth as a human being on this great earth is desirable...’ (Tēv. IV. 081. 4).

²⁴⁵ ‘தலையே நீவணங்காய் - தலை மாலை தலைக்கணிந்து ... தலையே நீவணங்காய்’ (தேவா. IV.09.1).

‘O Head of mine! Bow down to the Head of all the universe ... O eyes mine! Behold Him...’ (Tēv. IV.09.1).

²⁴⁶ ‘...அம்மானையடுதன் றன்ன யாதியையந்த மாய செம்மான வொளிகொண்மேனிச் சிந்தையு ளொன்றி நின்ற எம்மானைநினைய மாட்டே நென்செய்வான்றோன்றினேயே’ (தேவா. IV. 079.1).

‘... Once, a slave of past *karma*, I failed to remember my Lord. Now having gone mad, I babble like a fool...’ (Tēv. IV.079.1).

²⁴⁷ ‘கருவாய்க் கிடந்துன் கழலே நினையுங் கருத்துடையேன் உருவாய்த் தெரிந்துன்ற னாமம் பயின்றே னுனதருளால் திருவாய்ப் பொலியச் சிவாய நமவென்று நிறணிந்தேன் தருவாய் சிவகதி நீபா திரிப்புலி யூரரனே’ (தேவா. IV. 095.6).

imprint his feet, on his heart. In the absence of the Lord granting him this favour, he paradoxically suggests that the Lord's auspiciousness will be "doubted" as a Lord (Tēv. IV. 097.6)²⁴⁸.

Later, *Tirunāvukkaracar* who sought divine assistance declares that the Lord has been benevolent to him and granted him the gift of the mystical experience of being united to the Lord's 'sweet gold foot' (Tēv. IV. 81.4).²⁴⁹ This union of the devotee to *Śiva* is compared to the conjugal union of man and woman, which lasts forever without separation. *Śiva* owns the devotee as the lover owns his beloved and the beloved surrenders to *Śiva* as his protection and love. *Tirunāvukkaracar* sings of this experience in the persona of the female lover of classical poetry and gives a fine and powerful expression to the emotional aspect of Tamil *Śaiva* religion.

In this state of having received the assistance of the Lord, after having the mystical experience of being one with him, *Tirunāvukkaracar* searches for words to express his mystical experience. The ineffability of such an experience leads him to various expressions of delight. One such expression of delight is found in the narration of *Tirunāvukkaracar's* vision of *Śiva* seated at mount *Kailāsa*. *Cēkkiḷār* narrates that after 'seeing the inexpressible yearning with the blissful sight, he held his hand above his head and fell to the ground. Then he rose to his feet, sang, danced, and wept before the

'Lying in the womb, I thought only of your feet. Committing it to memory, I recited your name. Through your grace, I chanted "Hail *Śiva*," And wore the sacred ash as the sign of my blessing. O *Araṇ* of *Pātirippuliyūr*, Give me your own state of *Śiva*!' (Tēv. IV. 095.6)

²⁴⁸ '...அம்மை யடியேற் கருளுதி யென்பதிங் காரறிவார்

செம்மை தருசத்தி முற்றத் துறையுஞ் சிவக்கொழுந்தே' (தேவா.IV.097.6).

²⁴⁹ '...இனித்த முடைய வெடுத்தபொற் பாதமுங் காணப்பொற்றால்' (தேவா. IV.081.4).

presence of the Lord’ (PP. 1650)²⁵⁰, ‘tears poured like rain’ (PP. 1657)²⁵¹. Such expressions of the experience of divine assistance, also includes expressions of courage and fearlessness before the power of evil and suffering.

Tirunāvukkaracar also compares the experience of joy that is achieved in seeing *Śiva* in everything, to that of the soothing effects of the experience of nature (Tēv. V.014.10)²⁵². Thus, in poetic imagery and diction, the comparison made between the ineffable experiences of joy, to the experience of nature indicates the profoundness of *Tirunāvukkaracar*’s experience of *Śiva*. Such an experience for *Tirunāvukkaracar* is a gift of the divine and the profundity of such an experience is felt because of its ineffability. However, what is clear is that, these divine experiences are *pēyriṇpam* (பேரின்பம்) or a great delight which is far beyond all other joyful experiences that the world can offer. This experience of great delight is an inner experience because *Śiva* manifests Himself in the very depth of oneself (Tēv. VI. 028.10)²⁵³. Such a mystical experience is a dialogical process between *Śiva* and the devotee. It is *Śiva*’s duty on the

250 ‘கண்ட ஆனந்தக் கடலினைக் கண்களால் முகந்து தொண்டு
கைகுவித்து எதிர்விழுந்து எழுந்து மெய்குலைய அண்டர் முன்பு
நின்று ஆடினார் பாடினார் அமுதார் தொண்டனார்க்கு அங்கு நிகழ்ந்தன யார் சொல்வல்லார்’
(பெ.பு 1650).

251 ‘... ஆர்ந்த கண்ணீர் மழை தூங்க...’ (பெ.பு 1657).

252 ‘கனியி னுங்கட்டி பட்ட கரும்பினும் பனிம லர்க்குமுற பாவைநல் லாரினும்
தனிமு டிகவித் தாளு மரசினும் இனியன் தன்னடைந் தார்கிடை மருதனே’
(தேவா. 5.014.10).

253 ‘Sweeter than sweet fruit, raw cane sugar, Lovely women with fresh flowers in their hair,
Sweeter than sole dominion over vast lands, Is Itaimarutu’s Lord To those who reach him’
‘I hold no one who deserve me. Than myself; yet within myself. There is one dear to me –
Ṭṇṇampar’s Lord Who is the breath of life, Which enters and leaves me, Abides within’
(Tēv. VI. 028.10)

one hand to hold to his devotee, and on the other hand it is the duty of the devotee to completely surrender to *Śiva*'s protection (Tēv. V.164.1).²⁵⁴

The profound experience of the *Śiva*'s presence in one's self effects transformation in life, prompting a desire for service of Him. Service to *Śiva* is the motto followed by *Tirunāvukkaracar*. He carried a hoe with him as a symbol of this service. Therefore, *Tirunāvukkaracar* wandered from temple to temple singing the praise of *Śiva*, proclaiming the futility of pilgrimage to sacred places and the need to have a deep and abiding love for *Śiva*. He performed menial service in the shrines – washing and sweeping the temple floors, gathering flowers and making garland of various types, cutting grass to clear the path for *Śiva* devotees. He approached *Śiva* as a humble servant. *Śiva* is the master; the devotee is the servant ever alert to obey his Lord by loving and submissive service. He never forgot his daily duties to *Śiva* (Tēv. V.019.9, IV.01.6)²⁵⁵. *Tirunāvukkaracar* in the course of his life spiritualized this '*Śiva-tontu*' (சிவ தொண்டு), work as worship for *Śiva* and enlighten many seekers to experience divine love as the goal and the fulfilment of life.

What is worth noting is that *Cēkkilār* in exquisite imagery and poetic diction makes one witness coalescence of the two brilliant seers *Tirunāṇa Campantar* and *Tirunāvukkaracar* at the sacred temple of *Vedaranyam* hollowed by the Vedas. It is not a mere confrontation of a younger truth-seer meeting an older servitor of *Śiva*. Their spiritual animation and love of *Śiva* blazed in radiance in their gleaming countenance

²⁵⁴ 'Once he sought me out, came to me, and gave me his sign. The dear Lord ... asks me to come to him there' (Tēv. V.161.1)

²⁵⁵ '...தன்க டன்னடி யேனையுந் தாங்குதல் என்க டன்பயணி செய்து கிடப்பதே' (தேவா. V.019.9).

covered with holy ash in the ‘Five Letters’²⁵⁶ they chanted continuously connoting the divine name, and in the vivifying currents of the faith of the devotees who followed them. The self fulfilment seen in *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* and the self-denial of *Tirunāvukkaracar* converged in mid-point, and blazed a trail of compelte interaction of two-in-one love is *Śiva*. In a beautiful stanza, *Cēkkiḷār* delianates the evolving world with it dense obscurities and the two most intimate lovers of *Śiva*, *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* and *Tirunāvukkaracar* in the one pointed consciousness. The love-enegery of *Śiva* in *Sakti*, the moving principle of divine assistance, clears the clouds of unknowing before the the unifying and unanimous vision of truth perceived by the ‘child of wisdom’ i.e. *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* and noble *Tirunāvukkaracar* (PP. 1446-1458). Truly both the *nāyaṇmār* stepped into divine omnipresence in a upsurge of love ineffable and experienced the bliss of *Śivan* (சிவ ஆனந்தம் - *Śiva-āṇantam*) i.e. the bliss of being in *Śiva*.

Cēkkiḷār even narrates the *nāyaṇār* as one, who never grew tired of seeking the Lord’s assitence and records the time when the Lord did not bestow his kindness; he remonstrated with *Śiva* in his desolation. He expostulates the Lord as one ‘without mercy’ (இரக்கம் ஒன்று இல்லீர் : *irakkam onru illīr*) (PP. 1538)²⁵⁷. He takes a further step by demanding from the ‘Lord of the Vedas, who has vanished in the heavens, to bestow the favour to draw near to him and thereby to behold his form with his own eyes’

²⁵⁶ The five letter prayer is (நமசிவாய) ‘*na ma si va ya*’ (NB in roman script, this is five syllables of two letter each, but in Tamil script each syllable is a single letter). The syllables ‘na’ (ந) and ‘ma’ (ம) represent the bondage in which the human soul is trapped, ‘si’ (சி) and ‘va’ (வா) represent *Śiva* and his *Sakti*, and ‘ya’ (ய) represents the soul in between the two.

²⁵⁷ ‘...தெண்ணீர் அணிந்தார் திருக்காப்பு நீக்கத் தாழ்க்கத் திருக்கடைப்பு எண்ணீர் இரக்கம் ஒன்று இல்லீர் என்று பாடி...’ (பெ.பு. 1538). *Cēkkiḷār* uses the word ‘இரக்கம்’ i.e. ‘mercy’ to mean that the *nāyaṇār* sought *Śiva* as a merciful God.

(PP. 1638)²⁵⁸. *Cēkkiḷār* portrays *Tirunāvukkaracar* as the one who tirelessly begged for *Śiva*'s favour, and continued to assert that even before a favour was granted it was received because he was confident the Lord was sure to grant him what he desired. *Cēkkiḷār* uses the actual words of *Tirunāvukkaracar* 'not only has he saved my life, but he has also showered his favour on me' and "I have done such wrong" but yet 'his flood tide of kindness reached even me' (PP. 1341-1342)²⁵⁹. *Cēkkiḷār* narrates various transformations that occurred in *Tirunāvukkaracar* as the result of receiving divine favour (PP. 1290 -1699).

However, it must be emphasised that, *Cēkkiḷār* does equate the experience of favour to the expression of emotion or the experience of worldly reality. Drawing congruence between the external expressions, enjoyment of worldly realities and the experience of favour, *Cēkkiḷār* expresses the ineffability of the experience of support. As a result, he states that the experience of benevolence is beyond all the pleasures that are gained from experiencing worldly realities. It makes one crave to be in the presence of the Lord (PP. 1648-1670). *Cēkkiḷār* in narrating the life of *Tirunāvukkaracar* honours him as the one who 'was transformed in the likeness of *Śiva*'s joy and wisdom, the ultimate attainment' (PP. 1697)²⁶⁰. *Cēkkiḷār* sees *Tirunāvukkaracar* as a mystic who saw

²⁵⁸ '...அண்ணலே எனை ஆண்டு தொண்டு அருவிய அமுதே
விண்ணிலே மறைந்தருள் புரிய வேத நாயகனே
கண்ணினால் திலக்கயிலையில் இருந்த நின்லோலம்
நண்ணி நான் தொழ நயந்து அருள்புரி எனப் பணிந்தார்...' (பெ.பு 1638).

²⁵⁹ '...அந்நின்ற நிலைக்கண் அகன்றிடலும் அடியேன் உயிரோடு அருள் தந்தது எனாச்...' (பெ.பு. 1341)
'...இங்குஎன் செயல்உற்றபிழைப்பு அதனால் ஏறாத பெருந்திடர்
ஏறிடநின் தங்கும் கருணைப் பெருவெள்ளம் இடத் தகுமோ என இன் னனதாம் மொழிவார்'
(பெ.பு 1342).

²⁶⁰ '...நண்அரிய சிவானந்த ஞானவடியே ஆகி அண்ணலார் சேவடிக்கீழ்
ஆண்ட அரசு அமர்ந்திருந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 1697).

Śiva in everything and everything in *Śiva*. His mysticism had a profound influence on *Cēkkiḷār*. He acknowledges this in his work (PP. 1455)²⁶¹.

3.5 The Mystical Quest of *Cuntaramūrti Nāyaṇār*

Apart from the *nāyaṇmār* mentioned above, another *nāyaṇār* whose mystical legacy influenced the shaping of the devotionism of the *Periya Purāṇam* is *Nampi Ārūraṇ* (நம்பி ஆரூரன்), popularly known as *Cuntaramūrtti* (சுந்தர மூர்த்தி) *nāyaṇār*. *Cuntaramutti* or ‘Handsome Lord’ lived in the ninth century after the Common Era. Though his life span was short, his contribution to the Tamil *Śaivism* equalled that of other *nāyaṇmār*. His composition of songs of praise of *Śiva*, one thousand and twenty six of them, are canonized as the seventh of the twelve *Tirumurai*. He initiated the tradition of hagiographical literature in Tamil *Śaivism* by listing the exemplary worshippers of *Śiva*. His hagiography which was known as the *Tiruttonṭar Tokai* (திருத்தொண்டர் தொகை) or the ‘Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord’ was used by *Cēkkiḷār* as a primary source for his master piece i.e. for the mystical narrative of the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP.48)²⁶².

²⁶¹ ‘அருள் பெருகு தனிக்கடலும் உலகுக்கு எல்லாம்
அன்பு செறி கடலுமாம் எனவும் ஓங்கும்
பொருள்சமய முதல்சைவ நெறிதான் பெற்று
புண்ணியக் கண் இரண்டு எனவும் புவனம் உய்ய இருள் கடுகண்டவர் அருளும் அகிலம்
எல்லாம் ஈன்றாள் தன் திருவருளும் எனவும் கூடித் தெருள் கலைஞானக் கன்றும் அரசம் சென்று
செங்சடை யானவர் கோயில் சார்ந்தார் அன்றே’ (பெ.பு. 1455).
They are a unique ocean of grace, inseparable and incomparable,
They are a sea of love ever expanding; they are a pair of eyes,
They are the essence of *Śaiva* pathway.
They are the embodiment of the grace of the one who drank poison to grant life eternal, whose
consort is her who gave life to all that exists.
They are to be emulated (PP. 1455).

²⁶² ‘மற்று இதற்குப் பதிகம் வந்தொண்டர்தாம்
புற்றிடத்துளம் புராணர் அருளினால்
சொற்ற மெய்த்திருத் தொண்டத் தொகைஎனப்
பெற்ற நற்பதிகம் தொழப் பெற்றதாம்’ (பெ.பு 48).

In the prologue to his work the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkkiḷār* recounts the circumstances which led *Cuntaramūrtti* to sing poems in praise of devotees who had melted in love for him and their matchless servitude to Him (PP. 11-50)²⁶³. In end of the narration *Cēkkiḷār* notes, willed by *Śiva*, and ‘that the whole world might find salvation and the *Śaiva* religion flourish, the famous poet *Nampi* sang the glory of the servants of the Lord’ (PP. 49)²⁶⁴. *Cuntaramūrtti* thus composes the garland of verses, listing the well recognised servitors of *Śiva* in his famous *Tiruttonṭar Tokai*²⁶⁵ which forms an authentic source for *Cēkkiḷār’s Periya Purāṇam*. It is through *Tiruttonṭar Tokai*, *Cuntaramūrtti* initiates a tradition of venerating the servitors of *Śiva* and composing poems about them. What makes this work distinct from the rest of the *nāyaṇmār*, apart from the poetic excellence and musical quality of the poems which were in varying degree common to all the poets, is the biographical dimension which emerges involuntarily.

This biographical aspect may be taken for granted as a natural outcome, though his intention was only to celebrate them as commissioned by *Śiva* and not to write their lives. Armed with humility and integrity, he tunes himself joyfully in worshipful reverence to carry out *Śiva’s* injunction and sees in it a flawless pathway to rid himself of

‘The Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord is the principal source of this present work. Its author was *Nampi* ...’ (PP 48).

²⁶³ *Cēkkiḷār* makes *Upamanyu Muni*, a famous hermit, relate the account. It is narrated that one day, *Upamanyu Muni* and his disciples saw a beam of light streak across the sky. The disciples requested the *Muni* to explain the effulgence. He replied “*Nampi Ārūraṇ!* indeed a noble man who had conquered the five senses”. “He is worthy of worship”. *Upamanyu* concluded that *Cuntaramūrtti*, once lived as *Ālālacuntarar*, an attendant of *Śiva*, in his celestial abode, *Kailāsa*. *Śiva* sent him to live on earth to fulfil his love for two damsels and serve *Śiva* as a human devotee. “In order the the South country where the penances abound might prosper, and the faultless ‘Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord’ be given to the world, aided by divine favour *Cuntaraṇ’s* attention lit upon them. “His is returning after enjoying in the guise of a human person the company of damsels”.

²⁶⁴ ‘உலகம் உய்யவும் சைவம் நின்று ஓங்கவும் அலகுஇல் சீர்நம்பி ஆரூரர் பாடிய நிலவு தொண்டர்தம் கூட்டம் நிறைந்து உறை குலவு தண்புனல் நாட்டு அணி கூறுவாம்’ (பெ.பு 49).

²⁶⁵ For *Cuntaramūrtti’s Tiruttonṭar Tokai*, see Appendix II.

pain and imperfection. He is filled with melting love towards the holy band of *Śiva* devotees and takes the pledge of loyal service to each of these mighty warriors. These two strands – one, worshiping of the servitors of *Śiva*, and two, the biographical account in his work – were picked up by *Cēkkiḷār*. *Cēkkiḷār* enlarges upon the tradition set by *Cuntaramūrtti* and gives him due recognition as the originator of these two strands of the celebrated tradition making *Cuntaramūrtti* the ‘hero’ or ‘தலைவன்’ of his work and constantly repeating his indebtedness to Him.

The influence of the servitors of *Śiva* on *Cuntaramūrtti*’s life is further evidence, as he makes use of many of their ideas, metaphors and similarities to present his own experience of *Śiva*. However two significant events mark him out among the *nāyaṇmār*. These were the experience of *Śiva* taking him captive as his servant (*āṭkol*: ஆட்கொள்) by obstructing (*taṭuttu*: தடுத்தது) his marriage²⁶⁶, and his sending of *Śiva* as a messenger to settle his domestic dispute²⁶⁷. *Cuntaramūrtti*’s differing yet familiar relationship with *Śiva* earned him the name ‘harsh devotee’ or ‘violent servant’ (*vaṇṇoṇṭar*: வண்ணொண்டன்) (PP. 216)²⁶⁸, while his casual loving companionship as a friend (தோழன்:

²⁶⁶ It is narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam* on *Cuntarar*’s wedding day *Śiva* appeared in the assembly disguised as an old man, showed the bridegroom a contract of bondage, and claimed that *Cuntarar* had been promised to him as his slave since generations past. *Cuntarar* denied the claim calling the old man “madman” (*pittaṇ*: பித்தன்), but the old man persisted, and the argument erupted into a violent quarrel. When the old man suddenly disappeared into the *aruṭṭurai* (‘shrine of grace’) temple at *Veṇṇeyallūr*, *Cuntarar* realized the true identity of the old man as *Śiva*, he sang a hymn declaring that he would forever be the slave of ‘the madman’ (PP. 147-227). The Lord called *Cuntarar* his ‘rude or aggressive devotee’ (*vaṇṇoṇṭar*) and commanded him to sing a song addressed to Him as “madman” (*pittaṇ*: பித்தன்).

²⁶⁷ On another occasion *Cuntarar* sought *Śiva*’s help in marrying yet another woman, *Caṅkili*. *Śiva* punished him with blindness when the poet broke his promise to *Caṅkili* and restored it in response to his pleas. *Śiva* in fact served as *Cuntarar*’s messenger to appease *Cuntarar*’s first wife’s anger at the saint’s infidelity

²⁶⁸ ‘மற்று நீ வன்மை பேசி வண்ணொண்டன் என்னும் நாமம் பெற்றனை நமக்கம் அன்பின்’ (பெ.பு 216). “because you spoke such violent words, you have earned the nickname ‘*Vanṇoṇṭar*’, or violent servant’ (PP 216).

tōlan) (Tēv. VII.51.9)²⁶⁹ with *Śiva* made him known as ‘the Lord’s comrade’ (*tampirāṇ tōlar*: தம்பிரான் தோழன்) (Staal,1988, p. x).

Initiated into a life by a transformative event in which he was claimed as *Śiva*’s ‘harsh devotee’, *Cuntaramūrtti* embarks on his journey to sing poems of devotion to *Śiva*. Just as other *nāyaṇmār*, *Cuntaramūrtti* too sings in praise of *Śiva*. *Śiva* is praised as the ‘*utaman*’ (உத்தமன்) (Tēv. VII. 100.2-10)²⁷⁰. In Tamil the word ‘*utaman*’ (உத்தமன்) is used to connote an excellent or virtuous or great ‘man’. An excellent or virtuous woman is referred as ‘*utami*’ (உத்தமி). This excellent man i.e. *Śiva* for *Cuntaramūrtti* is also loving father. Most of *Cuntaramūrtti* poems sing of *Śiva* as a father in the masculine personal pronoun sense (Tēv.VII.34.1)²⁷¹.

For *Cuntaramūrtti* *Śiva* as a father is also a good friend (தோழன்:*tōlan*) who knows the heart of his friend. Hence, *Cuntarar* wished to be ever closer in an intimate friendship with the Lord. It was for this reason at every juncture of his life, when subjected to conflict and deprivation he turned to his faithful friend (தோழன்: *tōlan*) i.e. the *Śiva* (Tēv. VII. 51.10)²⁷². Such friendship for *Cuntarar* dispels the inner darkness that

²⁶⁹ ‘ஏழிசையாய் இசைப்பயனாய் இன்னமுதாய் என்னுடைய தோழனுமாய் யான் செய்யுந் துரிசுகளுக் குடனாகி மாறையொண்கண் பரவையைத்...’ (தேவா. VII.051.10).
‘I am an ignorant wretch, parted from my God Ārūr, from him who is the seven notes of music, the fruit of my song, my sweet ambrosia, the dear friend who aided me in my crimes...’ (Tēv. VII.051.10).

²⁷⁰ ‘...ஊனுயிர் வேறுசெய்தான் நொடித் தான்மலை உத்தமனே’ (தேவா. VII.100.1).
‘...He elevated my body and life within it. How great is He! (Tēv. VII.100.1).

²⁷¹ ‘தம்மை யேபுகழ்ந் திச்சை பேசினுஞ் சார்கி னுந்தொண்டர் தருகிலாப் பொய்ம்மை யாளரைப் பாடா தேயயெந்தை புகலூர் பாடுமின் புலவீகான்’ (தேவா. VII.51.1).
‘Poets! Though you speak flattering words praising them and though you are always by their side. Without praising the hypocrites who are bundle of lies and who are slaves to worldly pleasures praise the greatness of pukalūr of our father’ (Tēv. VII.51.1).

²⁷² ‘ஏழிசையாய் இசைப்பயனாய் இன்னமுதாய் என்னுடைய தோழனுமாய் யான்செய்யுந் துரிசுகளுக் குடனாகி...’ (தேவா. VII.51.10)
‘From him who is the seven notes of music, The fruit of my song, my sweet ambrosia,

prevents that perfect union with the Lord and impels one to constantly yearn for Him (Tēv. VII.51.1)²⁷³. It is because as a friend *Śiva* is in love with his devotee. For his love for his devotee, *Cuntaramūrtti* makes a point of calling *Śiva* as ‘the mad one’ (*pittā piraicūṭi*: பித்தாபிறைசூழ்) (Tēv. VII.1.1)²⁷⁴. Hence, like his predecessors, repeatedly but uniquely, speaks of the *Śiva* as love. *Cuntaramūrtti*, therefore, enacted a vast range of incredible acts and subjected himself to immense obscurations but as a faithful servant of *Śiva*, severed Him as a loving companion. In one of the poems, he sings that his relationship with the world was not to split but to unify and harmonise in love (Tēv. VII. 51.1)²⁷⁵.

This intimate companionship, which is so often a single-minded devotion, is fostered by the constant remembrance of his presence, by the constant calling of him and by the constant recital of his name within the innermost self; it was a means by which one can ever remain in blissful union with the Lord (Tēv. VII. 48.1)²⁷⁶. Hence, single-minded love to *Śiva* is one of the recurring themes in the hymns of *Cuntaramūrtti* (Tēv.

The dear friend who aided me in my many crimes...’ (Tēv. VII. 51.10).

²⁷³ ‘பத்திமையும் மடிமையையுங் கைவிடுவான் பாவியேன் பொத்தினநோ யதுஇதனைப் பொருளறிந்தேன் போய்த்தொழுவேன் முத்தினைமா மணிதன்னை வயிரத்தை முர்க்கனேன் எத்தனைநாள் பிரந்திருக்கேன் என்ஆருர் இறைவனையே’ (தேவ. VII. 51.1).

‘I know the nature of the disease that afflicts me, and makes me a sinner, makes me stop loving and serving the Lord; I hasten to worship him. How long must I, a fool, be parted from my Lord ... (Tēv. VII. 51.1).

²⁷⁴ ‘பித்தாபிறை சூழ்பெரு மானையரு ளாளா எத்தான்மற வாதேநினைக் கின்றேன்மனத் துன்னை வைத்தாய்பெண்ணைத் தென்பால்வெண்ணெய்...’ (தேவா. VII.I.I).

‘O madman with the moon-crowned hair, God of grace, O Lord, How can I forget you?’ (Tēv. VII.1.1).

²⁷⁵ ‘பத்திமையும் மடிமையையுங் கைவிடுவான் பாவியேன் பொத்தினநோ யதுஇதனைப் பொருளறிந்தேன் போய்த்தொழுவேன் முத்தினைமா மணிதன்னை வயிரத்தை முர்க்கனேன் எத்தனைநாள் பிரந்திருக்கேன் என்ஆருர் இறைவனையே’ (தேவ. VII. 51.1).

‘I know the nature of the disease that afflicts me, and makes me a sinner, makes me stop loving and serving the Lord; I hasten to worship him. How long must I, a fool, be parted from my Lord ... (Tēv. VII. 51.1).

²⁷⁶ ‘மற்றுப் பற்றெனக் கின்றி நின்றிருப் பாத மேமனை பாவித்தேன் பெற்ற லும்பிறந் தேனஇ னிப்பிற வாத தன்மைவந் தெய்தினேன் கற்ற வர்தொழு தேத்தஞ் சீர்க்கறை யூறிற் பாண்டிக் கொடுமுடி நற்ற வாஉனை நான்ம றக்கினுஞ் சொல்லும்நா நமச்சி வாயவே’ (தேவா. VII.048.1).

‘Renouncing all my ties, I think only of your feet. Thinking of them, I have achieved the purpose of my birth ... Even if I forget you, my tongue would still say: “Hail *Śiva*!” (Tēv. VII. 048.1).

VII.051.9)²⁷⁷. The *nāyaṇār* pleads guilty to his many failings in expressing this single-minded devotion to *Śiva*. He sings that, showing no gratitude to *Śiva* and his devotees, he has been wasting his life ‘wandering, committing crimes and insulting other men true to Him alone (Tēv. VII. 69.1)²⁷⁸. He regrets ‘having gone astray from the right path and spoken only lies (Tēv. VII. 001.4)²⁷⁹. With deep sense of regret and humility, openly calling himself lower than a ‘*nāyēn*’ (நாயன்) meaning dog, he considers himself as the lowest of the devotees (Tēv. VII.069.8)²⁸⁰.

This sense of lowliness does not prevent an optimism that results from the placing his full trust in the forgiving of *Śiva* (பிழையுள்ள பொறுத்திடுவர் : *piḷaiyaḷḷaṇa poruttiṭuvar*) (Tēv. VII.89.1)²⁸¹. He boldly asserts his confidence in *Śiva*. The source of his optimism is his faith that the devotee has *Śiva* for support refuge (Tēv. VII. 54.1)²⁸². *Cuntaramūrtti* further sings ‘I worship no god other than you. I am blind, but if you would give vision, it is you that I want to see. You who can make the blind see! (Tēv.

²⁷⁷ ‘கையகன்றிட் டெற்றுளனாய்ப் பிரிந்திருக்கேன் என் ஆருர் இறைவனையே’ (தேவா. VII.051.9). ‘...How can I live far away from my god in Arur? ... The god whom I love with all my heart? (Tēv. VII.051.9).

²⁷⁸ ‘திருவும்மெய்ப் பொருளுஞ் செல்வமும் எனக்குன் சீருடைக் கழல்கள்என் நெண்ணி ஒருவரை மதியா துறாமைகள் செய்தும் ஊடியும் உறைப்பானாய்த் திரிவேன் முருகமர் சோலை சூழ்திரு முல்லை வாயிலாய் வாயினால் உன்னைப் பரவிடும் அடியேன் படுதுயர் களையாய் பாகா தாபரஞ் சுடரே’ (தேவா. VII.069.1).

‘Taking your glorious feet for my blessing and lasting wealth and treasure, I wander, committing crimes, insulting other men, true to you alone, O Lord of holy Mullaivāyil of fragrant groves! Since I am your devotee, free me from suffering, O Lord of Souls, Supreme Light! (Tēv. VII. 69.1).

²⁷⁹ ‘...கொடியேன்பல பொய்யேஉரைப் பேணைக்குறிக் கொள்நீ...’ (தேவா. VII.001.4).

²⁸⁰ ‘நமபனே அன்று வெண்ணெய்நல் லூரில் நாயினேன் றன்னைஆட் கொண்ட சம்புவே...’ (தேவா. VII.069.8)

²⁸¹ ‘பிழையுள்ள பொறுத்திடுவர் என்றடியேன் பிழைத்தக்கால் பழியதனைப் பாராதே’ (தேவா. VII. 089.1).

²⁸² ‘அழுக்கு மெய்கொன் திருவடி யடைந்தேன் அதுவும் நான்படற் பாலதொன் றானால்’ (தேவா. VII. 54.1).

‘Burdened with a foul body, I take refuge in your holy feet – if this is what I deserve, remember, O Lord!’ (Tēv. VII.54.1).

VII. 92.8)²⁸³. The higher experience of this love of *Śiva* is expressed by in terms of delicate affection and *Cuntaramūrtti* too compares the experience of the *Śiva* to the enjoyment of material objects and taste and sweetness that accrues by eating various edibles (Tēv. VII. 24.1)²⁸⁴.

What should be noted is that the path followed by *Cuntaramūrtti* is the path of a friend. One of the well-known names of *Cuntaramūrtti* is ‘*tōlar*’ (தோழர்) (Tēv. VII.51.9)²⁸⁵ which means the friend of the Lord. *Cuntaramūrtti* obeyed the dictum of entering into a dialogic relationship with *Śiva* and exemplified, in his realisation that relationship of a friend with *Śiva* as a boon companion. *Śiva* was his best friend. Although he won friendship of the Lord and took liberties with Him that one normally takes with a friend, he never forgot the supremacy of the Lord. His friendship was rooted in *Śiva*’s supremacy, and it is not of the usual commonplace variety. *Śiva* was his friend and at the sametime his Lord. In one of the verses of his poem, he expresses his intense longing for union with him and asks, “When can I approach Thee O Lord?” (Tēv.

²⁸³ ‘பேணா தொழிந்தேன் உன்னைஅல்லாற்பிற தேவரைக் காணா தொழந்தேன் காட்டுதி யேல்இன்னங் காண்பன்நான் பூணான் அரவா புக்கொளியூர்அவி னாசியே காணாத கண்கள் காட்டவல்லகறைக் கண்டனே’ (தேவா. VII.092.8).

²⁸⁴ ‘பண்ணிடைத் தமிழொப்பாய் பழத்தினிற் கவையொப்பாய் கண்ணிடை மணியொப்பாய் கடுவிருட் கடரொப்பாய் மண்ணிடை யடியார்கள் மனத்திடர் வாராமே விண்ணிடைக் குருகாவூர் வெள்ளடை நீயன்றே’ (தேவா. VII.29.6).
‘You are like the sweetness in music; you are like the sweet taste found in fruits. You are as precious as the apple of the eye. You are like the light in the midst of dense darkness. You who are in the outer-space, is the protecting Lord, vellatai in Kurukāvūr, so that sufferings may not enter into the minds of devotees in this world’ (Tēv VII.29.6).

²⁸⁵ ‘ஏழிசையாய் இசைப்பயனாய் இன்னமுதாய் என்னுடைய தோழனுமாய் யான் செய்யுந் துரிசுகளுக் குடனாகி மாறையொண்கண் பரவையைத்... (தேவா. VII.051.10).
‘I am an ignorant wretch, parted from my God Ārūr, from him whois the seven notes of music, the fruit of my song, my sweet ambrosia, the dear friend who aided me in my crimes...’(Tēv. VII.051.10).

VII.84.9)²⁸⁶. The poems composed by *Cuntaramūrtti* reveals a sense of friendly familiarity and at the same time they are inspired by a deep devotion.

Just as the other *nāyaṇmār* who influenced his vision of mysticism, *Cēkkiḷār* devoted considerable attention to *Cuntaramūrtti nāyaṇār*. His life story is narrated in the form of a biography and is used as a single plot that unifies the other biographies of the *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam*. This is evident in *Cēkkiḷār*'s clear placement and praise of the life story of the *Cuntaramūrtti* in the narration. His life story appears in verses 22-29, 147-349, 3160-3374, 3753-3927 and 4234-4286 and forms the centrifugal force around which *Periya Purāṇam* is created. This admiration of *Cēkkiḷār* is easily discerned by his constant referrals to the *Cuntaramūrtti* in various other places (PP. 550, 972, 1270).²⁸⁷ *Cēkkiḷār* venerates *Cuntaramūrtti* as a 'devotee of the feet of the Lord', as the one 'who had the Lord in his heart', a 'great man' and a one 'worthy of imitation' (PP. 29)²⁸⁸.

What is even more significant in the *Periya Purāṇam*, in the biography of *Cuntaramūrtti*, is that such a *Śiva* manifests himself in human form (PP. 231)²⁸⁹, to claim friendship with his devotees. His spiritual essence comes in human form to dispel the

²⁸⁶ '...நாயடியேன் எய்துவ தென்கொலோ கார்வயல் சூழ்கான்ப...' (தேவா. VII.084.9).

²⁸⁷ '...பலர்புகழ் வெண்ணெய் நல்லூர் ஆவணப் பழமைகாட்டி உலகு உய்ய ஆண்டு கொள்ளப் பெற்றவர் பாதம் உன்னித் தலைமிசை வைத்து வாழும் தலைமை நம் தலைமை ஆகும்' (பெ.பு. 550).

'For the salvation of the world, the Lord ... produced the ancient deed of ownership at *Tiruveṇṇeyallūr*, and there took possession of his servant. Now we place our head beneath his servant's feet and mediate upon them' (PP. 550).

²⁸⁸ '...தம்பிரதைத் தன் உள்ளம் தழீஇயவன் நம்பி ஆருரன் நாம் தொழும் தன்மையான்' (பெ.பு. 29)

²⁸⁹ 'அதுகண்டு ...பொதுமடத்தின் உள்புகுந்து ... பூந்தாரான் திருமுடிமேல் பதுமலர்த்தாள் வைத்துப் பள்ளி கொள்வார் போல் பயின்றார்' (பெ.பு. 231).

'Seeing this, the Lord ... unknown to all entered the monastery. There he made as if to lie down to sleep with his lotus feet ...' (PP. 231).

darkness of his devotees and to claim oneness with him (PP. 407).²⁹⁰ This spiritual essence of God is a redemptive grace (*aruḷ*) of His love. When a devotee gets entangled by this love, the Lord abides in this love (PP. 337)²⁹¹. The influence of *Cuntaramūrtti* on shaping the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam* is very evident when *Cēkkiḷār* sings of the *nāyaṇār*, in the state of being possessed by the Lord (PP. 252)²⁹².

3.6 Summary

The *Periya Purāṇam* of *Cēkkiḷār* is an invaluable hagiography of the *Śiva-toṇṭar* (சிவ-தொண்டர்) or servitors of *Śiva*. It gives information about the sixty-three *nāyaṇmār* of whom the major four, *Tirumūlar nāyaṇār*, *Tiruñāṇacampantar*, *Tirunāvukkaracar* and *Cuntaramūrtti nāyaṇār*, together account for well over half of the total length of the *Periya Purāṇam*. It is their lives that form the basis for the entire composition of the *Periya Purāṇam*; of 4286 poems almost 2409 of them are on these *nāyaṇmār*. For each of these four, *Cēkkiḷār* narrates the circumstances of their birth and early life, the way in

²⁹⁰ ‘ஆயும் நுண்பொருள் ஆகியும் வெளியே அம்பலத்துள் நின்று ஆடுவார் உம்பர் நாயகிக்கும் அ.து அறியவோ பிரியா நங்கைதான் அறியாமையோ அறியோம் தூயநீறு பொன் மேனியில் விளங்கத் தூர்த்த வேடமும் தோன்ற வேதியர் ஆய் முாய வண்ணமே கொண்டும் தொண்டர் மறாத வண்ணமும் காட்டுவான் வந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 407).

‘The Lord who dances in the sacred court for all to see is at the same time the finest spiritual essence. One day, in order to dispel to the world the geneoristy of his servant, the Lord took the disguise of a Brahmin of a dissolute character...’ (PP. 407).

²⁹¹ ‘மன்பெருந்திரு மாமறை வண்டு சூழ்ந்து அன்பர் சிந்தை அலர்ந்த செந்தாமரை நன்பெரும் பரமானந்த நல்மது எந்தரத்தும் அளித்து எதிர்நின்றன’ (பெ.பு. 337).

‘Like the red lotus, His holy feet, blossoms in the heart of those who love him. Like beetles that move around the lotus flower, the Vedas resound around his feet, Though, I am unworthy, those feet of the lord, stand before me, and have given the wine of heavenly bliss’ (PP. 337).

²⁹² ‘ஐந்துபேர் அறிவும் கண்களே கொள்ள அளப்பு அரும் கரணங்கள் நான்கும் சிந்தையே ஆகக் குணம் ஒரு மூன்றும் திருந்து சாத்துவிகமே ஆக இந்துவாழ் சடையான் ஆடும் ஆனந்த எல்லைஇல் தனிப்பெருங் கூத்தின் வந்தபேர் இன்ப வெள்ளத்துள் திளைத்து மாறுஇலா மகிழ்ச்சியில் மலர்ந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 252).

‘All his five senses were merged in the vision of his eyes, the four faculties of the mind merged and fixed on the Lord in meditation, the three qualities of him were enlightened now as pure intelligence, he was in peerless joy, poised in the bliss of the dance of the divine’ (PP. 252).

which they became *Śiva* devotees, the pilgrimages from temple to temples, their service to *Śiva*, and the end of their mortal life.

It is discernable in the narratives each of the four *nāyaṇmār* emerges with a distinct personality and they each followed a specific mode of reaching *Śiva* as if it is a unique manner of devotion to *Śiva*. There are four manifestation of the life of devotion that can be affirmed in their pathway to *Śiva*. The first is *yōgam* (all actions yoked to bodily discipline and meditation), which implies internal worship, a path followed by *Tirumūlar nāyaṇār*. This leads to attain the form of *Śiva* as *Tirumūlar* notes ‘becoming *Śiva*’ is the goal of *Vedanta-Siddhanta* (TM. 2393).²⁹³ The second is intimate service to *Śiva* in temples as a good son. This takes the devotee nearer to *Śiva*. This is the path followed by *Tiruñāṇacampantar* often referred to by *Cēkkiḷār* as the child of God, and is regarded as the one who dedicated himself to the service of *Śiva* in the temple and therefore as the good exemplar of the path of a good son. The third is a way of *Śiva*-realization through dedicated physical activity. It implies all work as service to the Lord. It consists in external acts of worship like cleaning the temple, gathering flowers for the deity. This is called the path of a servant. This leads one to reside in *Śiva*’s abode. It is this path *Tirunāvukkaracar* followed, a path as the Lord’s servitor. Thus by virtue of habitual practice of wielding the hoe to get rid of grass and weeds from temple precincts, *Tirunāvukkaracar* is portrayed as the exemplar of one who followed the path of the servant. The fourth is the path of a friend. *Cuntaramūrtti nāyaṇār* considered *Śiva* as his friend and as loving companion of *Śiva*. He earned the nickname ‘*vaṇṭoṇṭar*’ of the ‘the

²⁹³ ‘சிவமாதல் வேதாந்த சித்தாந்த மாகும்...’ (திரு 2393).

violent servant' (PP. 216)²⁹⁴ because of his stormy friendship with *Śiva*, but by the same token he was known as 'the companion of the *Śiva*' or '*tampirāṇ tōḷaṇ*' (தம்பிரான் தோழன்) (Staal, 2008, p.x). So *Cēkkiḷār* presents *Cuntaramūrtti* as an exemplar of the path of companionship with *Śiva*. For these vocal devotees of *Śiva*, singing in praise of *Śiva* is love-abounding and joy-abiding.

These four loom immense as the poet protagonists of the unfolding drama of devotion enacted in *Cēkkiḷār's Periya Purāṇam*. *Cēkkiḷār* immortalizes the lives and works of the illustrious ones. The beauty of the love of these *nāyaṇār* who made self-discipline and self-knowledge as the basis for experiencing *Śiva* as love was enshrined in their soulful songs on *Śiva* (PP. 4)²⁹⁵. The four classical *nāyaṇmār* have in common is this steadfast and unsullied love in their service and devotion to *Śiva* through songs. What inspired devotion in them is the indwelling presence of *Śivam*. These saints sought to march the presence of *Śiva* by the perfect surrender of their lives to His feet with immeasurable love, as revealed in the *nāyaṇmār* lives. Their experiences originate from above, within and without. The assistance of *Śiva* works from above as in the case of *Tiruñāṇacampantar* being fed by the divine milk. The experience of *Tirunāvukkaracar* and most of the devotees of *Śiva* spring by reflectively turning towards the self within. There is another kind of experience that originates from the beauty of the world without, the beauty of nature and the beauty of the many-faceted temples, to gaze into the heart of

²⁹⁴ 'மற்று நீ வன்மை பேசி வன்தொண்டன் என்னும் நாமம் பெற்றனை நமக்கம் அன்பின்' (பெ.பு 216). "because you spoke such violent words, you have earned the nickname '*Vaṇṭoṇṭar*', or violent servant' (PP 216).

²⁹⁵ 'மதிவளர் சடைமுடி மன்றுளாரை முன் துதிசெயும் நாயன்மார் தூய சொல்மலர் ... நுகர்தரும் புனிதர் பேரவை விதிமுறை உலகினில் விளங்கி வெல்கவே' (பெ.பு 4).

'In days of old the poet saints extolled in song the Lord dances in the sacred court ... To their assembly, be all due honour and success!' (PP. 4).

things as testified to in the experience of *Tirumūlar nāyaṇār* and *Cuntaramūrtti nāyaṇār*. All that they perceived externally in diversity was essentially one.

What is even more note worthy in relation to these *nāyaṇmār* is that they identified and spoke of *Śiva* as love. Therefore, the goal of human existence is to ‘see Him’ (Tēv. 6.087.1).²⁹⁶ Such a pursuit is possible only for those who melt in love for *Śiva*; for such devotees who worship *Śiva*, will be given the true knowledge of knowing Him and all the realities that exist. It is this true knowledge which leads one to experience of the undifferentiated unity of all the realities in *Śivam* (TM. 270).²⁹⁷ The source of such experience may vary but the goal of the human soul is to abide in absolute union with *Śiva* and to identify oneself in union with *Śiva* (TM. 2393).²⁹⁸ This was the devotional experience of the early Tamil *nāyaṇmār*.

Cēkkiḷār true to the Tamil *Śaiva* tradition followed by the *nāyaṇmār* considers them as saving acts and forms of devotion. *Cēkkiḷār* was a product of his own tradition; he followed the path set by the early Tamil *nāyaṇmār* and considered them as devotional giants. Their quest for a mystical union enkindled in him a deeper search for the meaning in life and of *Śiva*. *Cēkkiḷār* faithfully recounted the lives of these saints and the path of

²⁹⁶ ‘வானவன்காண் வானவர்க்கும் மேலா னான்கான்!
வடமொழியுந் தென்றமிழும் மறைகள் நான்கும்!’ (தேவ. 6.087.1).

‘He is far above the celestials, see Him! He became Sanskrit of the North and the Southern Tamil And the four Vedas; see Him! (Tēv. 6.087.1).

²⁹⁷ ‘அன்பு சிவம் இரண்டு என்பர் அறிவிலார்
அன்பே சிவமாவது ஆரும் அறிகிலார்
அன்பே சிவமாவது ஆரும் அறிந்தபின்
அன்பே சிவமாய் அமர்ந்திருந் தாரே’ (திரு. 270).

‘The ignorant think that love and God are two; they do not know love is God. After knowing that love of God. They remain possessed of love which is God’ (TM. 270).

²⁹⁸ ‘சிவமாதல் வேதாந்த சித்தாந்த மாகும்...’ (திரு. 2393).

devotion and knowledge shown by them (PP. 6)²⁹⁹. Like the early *nāyaṇmār*, *Cēkkiḷār* positions the divine-human i.e. the *Śiva*-devotee relationship at the heart of the narration. He acclaimed the greatness of *Śiva* as a God of love, and as ‘Father’ (*appan*: அப்பன்), ‘Mother’ (*ammai*: அம்மை) and ‘Friend’ (*tōḷaṇ*: தேழன்). *Cēkkiḷār*’s passion, as inspired by the early Tamil *nāyaṇmār*, was to posit a new type of devotion i.e. manifestation of devotion in service and moral living as communion with *Śiva* ... unsullied realization of *Śivan*, possession of *Śivan*, union in knowledge, and union in love while actively engaging with the world (PP. 143)³⁰⁰. In other words he wanted to communicate that self stands clothed in *Śiva*’s form. In conclusion *Cēkkiḷār*, as he himself acknowledged was heavily influenced by the tradition into which he was born and brought up (PP.5)³⁰¹. He goes beyond these early *nāyaṇmār* to produce his own contribution to Tamil *Śaivism* that sets him apart from other saints. This matter will be subject of discussion in later chapters.

²⁹⁹ ‘தெரிவுஅ ரும்பெருமைத் திருத்தொண்டர்தம் பொருஅ ரும்சீர் புகலல் உற்றேன் முற்றிப் பெருகு தெண்கடல் உற்றுஉண் பெருநசை ஒருசு ணங்கனை ஒக்கும் தகைமையேன்’ (பெ.பு. 6).

‘Like a thirsty dog that tries to drink up the mighty ocean, I have set myself the task of setting forth the matchless glory of the holy servants of the Lord, although it lies beyond all human understanding’ (PP. 6).

³⁰⁰ ‘கேடும் ஆக்கமும் கெட்ட திருவினார் ஓடும் செம்பொனும் ஒக்கவே நோக்குவார் கூடும் அன்பினில் கும்பிடலே அன்றி வீடும் வேண்டா விறலின் விளங்கினார்’ (பெ.பு 143).

‘...They do not seek heaven for themselves, but are content to be born into the world and to worship the Lord in love. That is the measure of their victory’ (PP. 143).

³⁰¹ ‘அளவு இலாத பெருமையர் ஆகிய அளவு இலாதஅடி யார்புகழ் கூறுவேன் அளவுகூட உரைப்பு அரிது ஆயினும் அளவுஇல் ஆசை தூர்ப்ப அறைகுவேன்’ (பெ.பு. 5).

‘The greatness of the devotees is beyond measure; beyond measure too their fame, which I am going to relate. Although to tell even the smallest measure of it is impossible, measureless zeal will spur me on to the endeavour’ (PP. 5).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE PERIYA PURĀṆAM

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will address, in brief, the historical context i.e. the political, religious and social climate in which the *Periya Purāṇam* was created. An author's composition generally reflects his or her society. It is his or her historical environment that informs an author's perspective for a deeper reflection and adaptation of the changing demands of life. This is equally significant, in the case of those authors who stand as catalysts for their generation, who by their critique of their historical settings, offer alternative value systems during times of transitions.

In the case of the *Periya Purāṇam*, however, it is widely held by scholars, that *Cēkkiḷār* authored his work to divert his king *Anapāyaṇ* i.e. *Kulōttuṅga* II (1133 A.C.E-1150 A.C.E)³⁰² from his preoccupation with the Jain epic *Cīvakacitāmaṇi* (சீவக சிந்தாமணி)³⁰³ i.e. 'wish fulfilling fabulous gem', which was more erotic in its nature and literary genre than religious or devotional in belief³⁰⁴. This motive of *Cēkkiḷār*, is first to

³⁰² For more about king *Anapāyaṇ*, see p. 26.

³⁰³ The text *Cīvakacitāmaṇi* is the most illustrious epic in the Tamil literature. It is considered to have originated within a Jain context dated between the second and the fifth centuries. The work is about a hero i.e. *Cīvaka* from his birth to the attainment of bliss. *Cīvaka* combined heroics with exotics to marry a series of seven women and to gain a kingdom. In the end he realized the transiency of possessions, renounced the kingship, took refuge in a Jain way of life as a monk. The work credited to *Tirutakkadevar* (திருத்தக்க தேவர்) is generally recognised as preeminent because it exhibits a literary excellence, rich in religious sentiment, full of reflection and remarks on the grounds of human action, and replete with information about the condition of the arts and customs of social life at the period of its composition. See. Pūrṇalingam Pillai, 1994, pp. 126-127; Hudson, 1989, pp. 373-374.

³⁰⁴ For the suggested motive, see Ryan, 1999, p. 360; Monius 2004b, p. 126.

have been suggested by *Umāpati Civācārya* (உமாபதி சிவாச்சாரியார்)³⁰⁵, a *Śaivite* theologian of the fourteenth century, in his work *Cēkkiḷār Nāyaṇār Purāṇam* (சேக்கிழார் நாயனார் புராணம்) or ‘The Story of *Cēkkiḷār Nāyaṇār*’ which is also known as *Tiruttoṇṭar Purāṇa Varalāru* (திருத்தொண்ட புராண வரலாறு) or ‘History of the Story of the Holy Servants of the Lord’³⁰⁶.

In *Cēkkiḷār Nāyaṇār Purāṇam* (சேக்கிழார் நாயனார் புராணம்), *Umāpati* relates that the king *Anapāyaṇ* was enthralled by reading the Jaina classic *Cīvācāritāmaṇi*, *Cēkkiḷār* was deeply offended over his king’s engrossment in the mundane stories which would yield only to momentary pleasures not real solace since they perpetuate earthly pleasures. Therefore, *Cēkkiḷār* advised the king to study instead the valuable historical accounts of lives of *nāyaṇmār* to give meaning to life leading to eternal bliss. The king then commanded *Cēkkiḷār* to write down an account of their lives for him to study. Accordingly *Cēkkiḷār* after receiving royal imperative to bring to limelight the heroic deeds of the *nāyaṇmār* as model of devotion to *Śiva* made his way to the temple at

³⁰⁵ *Umāpati Civācārya*, who dates himself in the introduction to his *Caṅkarpanirākaraṇam* in A.C.E. 1313 tells with great gusto in his *Cēkkiḷār nāyaṇār purāṇam* how *Cēkkiḷār* came to write the *Periya Purāṇam*. See. Zvelebil, 1975, pp. 178-179. *Umāpati* was a great *Śaiva* philosopher and one of the most prolific of the authors of *Saiva siddhanta* canonical texts in Tamil; this great *Śaivite* is credited with eight of the fourteen *Sastras*. They are (i) *Civappirakācam* (சிவப்பிரகாசம்) (1306 A.C.E), *Tiruvārūṭ payaṇ* (திருவருட்பயன்) (1307 A.C.E), *Viṇā veṇpā* (வினா வெண்பா) (1308 A.C.E), *Pōrrip paṇṇōtai* (போற்றிப் ப.ஹோடை) (1309), *Koṭikkavi* (கொடிக்கவி) (1309 A.C.E), *Neṇṇuvitūtūtu* (நெஞ்சுவிடுதூது) (1311 A.C.E), *Unmai neri viḷakkam* (உண்மை நெறி விளக்கம்) (1312 A.C.E), *Caṅkarpa nirākaraṇam* (சங்கற்ப நிராகரணம்) (1313 A.C.E). Apart from these he wrote (i) *Tiruttoṇṭar purāṇa cāram* (திருத்தொண்டர் புராண சாரம்), (ii) *Cēkkiḷār purāṇam* (சேக்கிழார் புராணம்), (iii) *Kōyir purāṇam* (கோயிற் புராணம்), (iv) *Tirumuṇai kaṇṭa purāṇam* (திருமுறை கண்ட புராணம்), (v) *Tiruppatik kōvai* (திருப்பதிக் கோவை). See. Prentiss, 1996, p. 237.

³⁰⁶ On the legend surrounding the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam*, see. Zvelebil, 1975, pp. 178-80.

*Citamparam*³⁰⁷, and was in a state of confusion as to how to begin such an important hagiography. He prayed to *Śiva* for the commencement of his work. To the surprise of everyone assembled there, an oracular voice with the ‘*Ulakellam*’ (உலகெலாம்) meaning ‘all the worlds’ was heard commanding him to begin his work. When it was finished, the king himself came to *Citamparam* and *Cēkḱilār* expounded the *Purāṇam* for the king and the priest of the temple daily for a whole year. The king who listened to the exposition of the biographies of the *nāyaṇmār* was overwhelmed with joy. It was then wrapped in silk, put in a golden casket upon the head of an elephant; *Cēkḱilār* was honoured with the title *Toṇṭarcīrparavurār* (தொண்டர் சீர் பரவுவார்) i.e. ‘the singer of the glories of the servants’.

In investigating the *Umāpati Civācārya*’s claim, Anne E. Monius notes that Tamil scholars seemed to agree with the *Umāpati*’s claim but ‘explored in depth by none’

³⁰⁷ The temple at *Citamparam* (சிதம்பரம்) is regarded as one of the important shrines for Tamil *Śaivism*. The word *Citamparam*, which refers to name of the town, comes from the Tamil word *Cirṛampalam* (சிற்றம்பலம்), which is also spelled as *Ciṭṭampalam* (சிட்டம்பலம்), meaning a ‘lesser or smaller’. The word *Citamparam* is also formed by the combination of two words சிற்றம் (*Cirram*) i.e. refers to heart, seat of affection or consciousness and அம்பலம் (*ampalam*) i.e. ‘open space’. Hence, *Citamparam* means ‘consciousness or affection of open hall’. Within the temple there are two structures: the golden court or hall of the shrine which is known as *Poṇṇampalam* (பொன் அம்பலம்) and adjacent to it, the lesser court or hall *Cirṛampalam* (சிற்றம்பலம்). *Cēkḱilār* sings that golden court ‘holds the special place in the heart of devotees as the beginning, the middle and the end of the message of the Vedas’ (அருமுறை முதலில் நடுவினில் கடையில் அன்பர்தம் சிந்தையில் அலர்ந்த திருவளர் ஒளிகூழ் திருச்சிற்றம்பலம் முன் திரு அணுக்கன் திருவாயில்) (PP.250). *Umapati*’s history of the *Citamparam* temple, i.e. the ‘*Koyil Purāṇam*’ (கேயில் புராணம்), is one of the most important sources for the history of the *Citamparam* temple in general, and the priests there in particular. In that edition *Citamparam* is referred to as *Koyil* (கோயில்) meaning ‘the temple’. *Cēkḱilār* dedicates a whole section in praise of the priests at *Citamparam* title ‘The Brahmins of Tillai’ (PP. 350-549). The word *Tillai* (தில்லை) alludes to the environment of the temple’s location. The mangrove of ancient *Tillai* tress of the forest surrounding the temple when it was first built. *Śiva* is captured here as கூத்தன் or நடராசன் (*Kūthan* or *Naṭarācaṇ*: ‘Dancer’) performing the ‘Dance of light’ in the golden hall of temple. It is for this reason the temple is also popularly venerated as ‘சிற்றம்பலம் தில்லை கூத்தன் கோயில்’ (*Citamparam Tillai Kūthan Koyil*). It must be noted that *Cēkḱilār* composed his work here at *Citamparam*. Although the temple has been the centre of attraction of many scholarly books and articles that describe the mythology of the Dancing *Śiva*, the temple’s art and architecture, and the lore surrounding this renowned temple town, only recently has there been a detailed attempt to reconstruct its very complicated history. See. Younger, 1995.

(2004b, p. 126). By examining *Umāpati*'s claim through the 'problem' of 'violence' as perpetuated in the *Periya Purāṇam*, she argued that the *Periya Purāṇam* has a 'complex pattern of engagement through narrative of resistance accompanied by borrowing and adaptation' (2004b, p. 166) from various texts. For her, the point of contention between the two texts i.e. *Cīvakacitāmaṇi* and the *Periya Purāṇam* lies in aesthetic and not in doctrinal disputes (2004b, p.127). Hence, for Monius the purpose of the *Periya Purāṇam* is to reconstitute the notion of love tainted by the Jain epic which for her could be easily understood as polemic against devotion 'through the cultivation of a new kind of aesthetic: love mixed with *vīra*, the "heroic". In so reconstituting the literary notion of loving devotion, *Cēkkiḷār* champions a new definition of love, of *aṇpu* for the Lord that befits a king who must act decisively in the world' (2004b, pp. 139-140).

On the other hand, Dennis Hudson, believes, that the composition was not to distract the king of his attachment to Jainism but to distract him from his unholy desire for erotic literature (1989, p. 374). In contrast to this erotic literature, the *Periya Purāṇam* is a hagiography about the *nāyaṇmār* whose devotion to *Śiva* is infused with the flavour of love called *aṇpu* (அன்பு). In the *Cīvakacitāmaṇi* the driving forces is a hero i.e. *Cīvaka* who stands stand in the foreground exciting the audience with his heroic and erotic adventures. In the *Periya Purāṇam* the driving force is *Śiva* who stands in the background as paternal figure, protecting his devotees as well as stirring up things to elicit responses from the *nāyaṇmār* (Hudson, 1989, pp. 373-374). Therefore, in taking his responsibility seriously as a moral custodian, as expected of a minister in the *Cōḷa* court,

Cēkkiḷār composed his work, based on the lives of the *nāyaṇmār*, as models for service and moral living³⁰⁸.

These views appears not to be tenable, for nowhere in the *Periya Purāṇam* does *Cēkkiḷār* mention the incident and king *Anapāyaṇ*'s request for the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam*. Nonetheless, it suggests that *Cēkkiḷār*'s *Periya Purāṇam* arose at the background of the devotion to *Śiva* propagated by the *nāyaṇmār* and at the same time out of a situation where the competing religious traditions sought kingly patronage for textual composition and existence. Hence, the *Periya Purāṇam* is more than a hagiography aimed at spiritual conversion of the king. It aims to provide an ideology based on the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* as an account of establishing *Śaivism* along the devotional pathway manifested in service and moral living that will enable Tamil society to adapt to emerging circumstance that began to define Tamil culture and identity, though the author's ulterior intention may have been the conversion of the king *Kulōttuṅga* II. Thus, this chapter highlights the realities that formed the perspectives of *Cēkkiḷār* which eventually led to

³⁰⁸ Peterson notes, 'since Cekkilar chose the lives of the Tamil Saivite saints for his subject, he obviously intended to provide Tamil Saivite hagiographical images and patterns against the ones expressed in Buddhist and Jaina hagiographical texts' (1983, p. 341). In fact the Jaina work in Sanskrit called the *Mahāpurāṇa* speaks of sixty three great men of ancient time. Both the number sixty three and the title, which is the Sanskrit equivalent of the Tamil '*Periya Purāṇam*' - both mean 'the great epic' – suggests that *Cēkkiḷār* regarded the Jain work as a rival which he sought to outdo. It cannot be alleged, however, that he actually derived the number sixty three from the Jain work, because he has another source for that figure, to which as noted *Cēkkiḷār* himself make frequent reference i.e. *Cuntarar's Tirut toṇṭar toaki* ('The Roll of the Holy Servants' of the Lord (PP. 48).

‘மற்று இதற்குப் பதிகம் வன்தொண்டர்தாம்
புற்றிடத்துளம் புராணர் அருளினால்
சொற்ற மெய்த்திருத் தொண்டத் தொகைஎனப்
பெற்ற நற்பதிகம் தொழப் பெற்றதாம்’ (பெ.பு 48).

‘The Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord is the principal source of this present work. Its author was *Nampi* ...’ (PP 48).

the creation of the *Periya Purāṇam*. This chapter is therefore divided into the following parts.

4.2 *Chālukya- Cōla* Dynasty: The Reign of king *Kulōttuṅga* II (1133 A.C.E – 1150 A.C.E)

4.3 The *Nāyaṇmār*’s Encounter with Other Religious Traditions

4.4 The *Nāyaṇmār* and the Temple Centred Worship

4.5 Summary

4.2 *Chālukya-Cōla* Dynasty: Reign of King *Kulōttuṅga* II

As a significant and unique piece of Tamil literature, the *Periya Purāṇam* is credited as a noble achievement of *Cēkkiḷār* under the patronage of King *Kulōttuṅga* II of the *Chālukya-Cōla* dynasty³⁰⁹. According to *Cēkkiḷār* it was this ‘who wished to receive his work i.e. *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 8)³¹⁰. This dynasty was formed as a coalition force amalgamating the Eastern *Chālukya* dynasty, who ruled the *Vengi* region from ca. 700 A.C.E to ca. 1130, and of the *Cōla* dynasty, who ruled the Tamil land from ca. 235 – 1170 A.C.E. The amalgamation was to seal the political void created by the death of the king *Ati Rajendra Cōla* (ca. 1070 A.C.E). In the lineage of his grandfather *Kulōttuṅga* I (ca. 1170 A.C.E – ca. 1120) who was the first king of the newly formed *Chālukya-Cōla* dynasty and as an heir apparent to his father *Vikram Cōla* (ca. 1118 A.C.E – ca. 1133

³⁰⁹ The timeline history of the *Cōla* dynasty who ruled the Tamil lands up to 13th century is divided into these periods:

- i. The early *Cōla* period : ca. 235 B.C.E – ca. 161 A.C.E
- ii. The interregnum : ca. 200 A.C.E – 848 A.C.E
- iii. Medieval *Cōla* period : ca. 848 A.C.E – 1070 A.C.E
- iv. Later *Chālukya Cōla* : ca. 1070 A.C.E – 1279 A.C.E cf. (Nilakanta Sastri K. A., 1966, pp. 170-172).

³¹⁰ ‘மேய இவ்வரை கொண்டு விரும்புமாம் சேயவன் திருப்பேரம்பலம் செய்ய தூயபொன் அணி சோழன் நீடு ஊழிபார் ஆயசீர் அநபாயன் அரசவை’ (பெ.பு.8).

A.C.E), *Kulōttuṅga* II (ca. 1133 A.C.E – ca. 1150 A.C.E) inherited much of the political, social, cultural and religious veracities of both the *Chālukya* and *Cōla* dynasties.

King *Kulōttuṅga* II was considered a patron of letters (Kumar, 2008, p. 116)³¹¹, and it was he ‘who wished to receive’ his minister’s i.e. *Cēkkiḷār*’s work (PP. 8)³¹². Although its literacy style is based on the humanism of the early work of the *Caṅkam* Tamil classics and the devotionism of the *nāyaṇmār*, it reflected the pinnacle of Tamil literary culture under the rule of the king *Kolōttunga* II. In his reign, the medieval Tamil land enjoyed not only peace and prosperity but it also saw abundant religious and literary activities. *Cēkkiḷār* notes, in all the places where the ‘Tamil language flourishes’ the king ruled the land as his ‘exclusively own’ so that ‘all subjects could find protection under him’ (PP. 85)³¹³.

Cēkkiḷār’s admiration of *Kulōttuṅga* II could be further observed in the praises he lavished on the king for his command over the people and *Cēkkiḷār* refers to *Kulōttuṅga* II as ‘fearless king’ (‘வென்றி வெண்குடை அநபாயன்’: *venṇi veṇkuṭai anapāyaṇ*) who wields the righteous sceptre i.e. *Ceṇkōl* (‘செய்யகோல் அபயன்’ : *ceyyakōl apayaṇ*) (PP.

³¹¹ In his reign renowned Tamil poets such as *Cēkkiḷār*, *Kamban* (கம்பன்), *Oṭṭakkūttan* (ஓட்டகுத்தன்) and *Puḷḷēndi* (புகழேந்தி) found a peaceful environment in which to create their compositions. Their works include *Cēkkiḷār*’s *Periya Purāṇam*, *Kamban*’s *Kambarāmayanam* (கம்பராமாயணம்) and *Oṭṭakkūttan*’s *Uttara Kandam* (உத்தர காண்டம்) i.e. the last stanza of *Rāmayanam* (இராமாயணம்); *Puḷḷēndi* rendered the Tamil version of *Mahābaratham* (மகாபாரதம்). It can be discerned that the works like *Kalingattu Parani* (கலிங்கத்துப் பரணி) war poetry, composed in the *Caṅkam* literary style, was created in this period by *Cayam Koṇṭār*.

³¹² ‘மேய இவ்வரை கொண்டு விரும்புமாம் சேயவன் திருப்பேரம்பலம் செய்ய தூயபொன் அணி சோழன் நீடு ஊழிபார் ஆயசீர் அநபாயன் அரசவை’ (பெ.பு.8). ‘The *Cōla* king, *Anapāyaṇ* ... wishes to receive this book of mine’ (PP. 8).

³¹³ ‘நல் தமிழ்வரைப்பின் ஓங்கும் நாம் புகழ் திருநாடு என்றும் பொன்முடி தோளால் வையம் பொதுக் கடிந்து இனிது காக்கும் கொற்றவன் அநபாயன் பொன் குடைநிழல் குளிர்வது என்றால் மற்றுஅதன் பெருமை நம்மால் வரம்உற விளம்பல் ஆமோ’ (பெ.பு 85).

22)³¹⁴. By drawing attention to the king as belonging to the *Sūrya-vaṃśa* (செங்கதிரோன் வழி : *ceṅkatirōṇ vaḷi*) or the *Cōḷa* dynasty and as the one who hails from the race of *Maṇu* (PP. 98)³¹⁵, *Cēkkiḷār* affirms not only the ‘justness’ but also the ‘divine kingship’ of *Kulōttuṅga* II. The king was not only a secular ruler who established order on earth, but he was also a manifestation of a deity who offered sacrifice for the benefit of those who dwelt in the heavenly abode (PP. 99)³¹⁶. In this identification, *Cēkkiḷār* pays respect to *Kulōttuṅga* II both as a deity and as a king or god-king; it is further affirmed in reference to the king i.e. *Anapāyaṇ* has the one who roofed in gold the sacred hall at *Tillai* (PP. 1218)³¹⁷. In this way, the king’s ‘rank’ in society was determined not only in the secular realm of governance but also as, Venkatasubramanian notes, in the ‘devotional context’ (2010, p. 35). The king in essence was seen as the ‘symbol of unity’ and ‘pillar of the state’ (Veluthat, 2010, p. 38) i.e. one to be acknowledged as deity. What should be emphasised is that the king’s greatness mentioned in the the *Periya Purāṇam* is

³¹⁴ ‘...மெய்ஒளி தழைக்கும் தூய்மையி னாலும் வென்றி வெண்குடை அநபாயன் செய்யகோல் அபயன் திருமனத்து ஓங்கும் திருக்கயி லாயநீள் சிலம்பு’ (பெ.பு. 22).

‘...It rises high like the spirit of the fearless *Cōḷa*, *Anapāyaṇ*, who bore the sceptre of justice and the white parasol of victory’ (PP. 22).

³¹⁵ ‘அன்ன தொல்நகருக்கு அரசு ஆயினான் தன்னு செங்கதிரோன் வழித் தோன்றினான் மன்னுசீர் அநபாயன் வழிமுதல் மின்னும் மாமனிப் பூண் மனுவேந்தன்’ (பெ.பு.98).

‘*Maṇu* ... was descended from the sun, and ... forbearer of *Anapāyaṇ*’ (PP 98). Here *Cēkkiḷār* affirms king’s role on earth was similar to that of gods. As it is clear, this proposition is advanced in relating the monarch to the first king, *Maṇu*, the son of *Vivasan*, the Sun god. Hence, *Maṇu*, who is thought to have lived at the time of the origin of the world, the first ruler, was believed not only a descendent of a deity but also the primal man, progenitor of all humanity and also the primal king. The noun *nīti* : நீதி (justice, righteousness) is added to the *Cōḷa* king’s name in honour of his achievements as in *Cēkkiḷār’s Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 100).

‘கொற்ற ஆழி குவலயம் சூழ்ந்திடச் சுற்றும் மன்னர் நிகைடை சூழ்ந்திடச்

செற்றம் நீக்கிய செம்மையின் மெய்ம்மனுப் பெற்ற நீதியும் தன்பெயர் ஆக்கினார்’ (பெ.பு. 100).

‘By virtue of fairness in reconciling enemies, he earned the title of “the just”, and so his name was extended to “*Maṇunīti*” (PP. 100).

³¹⁶ ‘மண்ணில் வாழ்தரு மன்உயிர்கட்கு எலாம் கண்ணும் ஆவியும் ஆம் பெருங்காவலான் விண்உளார் மகிழ்வு எய்திட வேள்விகள் எண் இலாதன மாண இயற்றினான்’ (பெ.பு. 99)

‘... for the benefit of the dwellers in heaven also, he offered worship’ (PP. 99).

³¹⁷ ‘சென்னி அபயன் குலோத்துங்கச் சோழன் தில்லைத் திருஎல்லை பொன்னின் மயம் ஆக்கிய வளவர் போர்ஏறு என்றும் புவிகாக்கும்’ (பெ.பு. 1218).

For the explanation of the sacred hall at *Tillai*, see p. 122.

in contrary to what is normally understood of the king *Kulōttuṅga* II as one who was lost in his affection to Jain epic i.e. *Cīvakacitāmaṇi* and that *Cēkkiḷār* authored his work to divert his king *Kulōttuṅga* II from his preoccupation with the Jain epic.

The remarkable achievements of king *Kulōttuṅga* II were also celebrated in other significant works of Tamil literature, known as the *Kulōttuṅga Cōḷan Ula* (குழுதுங்க சோழ உலா), and in the *Tukkayāgapparaṇi* (துக்கயாகப் பரணி) composed by *Ottakutar* who was a court poet of *Kulōttuṅga* II (Natarajan, Venkataraman and Ramachandran, 1994, pp. 80-81). The only derogatory statement discovered by scholars, other than the one highlighted by *Umāpati* of the king's addiction to the erotic epic *Cīvakacitāmaṇi*, is the king's intolerance towards *Vaiṣṇavism* (Manninezath, 1993, p. 23; Hudson, 1989, p. 398); this devotional phenomenon centred on devotion to the God *Viṣṇu*³¹⁸. The king is portrayed as a *Śaivite* fundamentalist, who forcibly removed the icon of the *Viṣṇu* from

³¹⁸ In parallel to *Śaivism*, there emerged a similar kind of devotional religiosity within *Vaiṣṇavism* propagating a devotion to *Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa*. The proponents of these devotion were known as *Ālvārs* (ஆள்வார்) or 'those immersed' in the 'seas of divine bliss' or 'God-intoxicated' ones (Devasenapathi, 1997, p. 97). Their hymns, which are sublime songs, sung in praise of *Viṣṇu* in all his aspects were edited into a collection known as *Nālāyira-Divya-Prabandham* (நாலாயிர திவ்யபிரபந்தம்) or the 'Four Thousand Garland of Verses to God'. They contain teaching related to the *Vaiṣṇava* theology. Their understanding of *Viṣṇu*, as a personal God of their devotion allowed the *Ālvārs* to teach *Viṣṇu* as a tangible personal Lord who is to be reached through devotion. Hence, they saw unceasing mediation with the discipline of loving devotion, as an ideal way to achieve liberation or *mōksha* (Kesarcodi-Watson, 1992, p. 118). The *Ālvārs*, therefore, envisaged love as the emotion of human as of having a divine purpose. The nature of devotion in the religiosity of the *Ālvārs* was to be erotically in love with God. For *Ālvārs*, a true devotee does not love God because she seeks something from God, but she, the devotee, loves Him because she is romantically or passionately in love with Him, the Lord. Hence, they the *Ālvārs* exemplified an affection to *Viṣṇu* through religious devotion and love poetry. They, above all expressed this devotion in passionate and erotic expressions. An example of this erotic imagery is to be found in the poem of *Āṇṭāl*, a female *Ālvār* of the ninth-century:

My soul melts in anguish – he cares not
If I live or die. If I see the Lord of *Govardhana*
That looting thief, that plunderer,
I shall pluck by their roots these useless breasts,
I shall fling them at his chest; I shall cool the raging fire within me. (Translation from Dehejia, 1990, pp. 125-126).

Nonetheless, their erotic but sacred metaphors used in the poems ends with full consummation or in the union of the Divine and Human relationship.

the courtyard of the *Naṭarācaṇ* temple at *Citamparam* (Aiyangar, 2004, p. 319). However, such a claim can possibly be ignored in the light of the rationale that the king wanted to have his father's wish fulfilled, for the purpose of the renovation and embellishment of the temple (Reddy, 2009, pp. 109-110).

At the concrete level, the temple at *Citamparam* at the time of *Kulōttuṅga* was at the heart of the *Cōḷa* dynasty. Temples were 'integrative central institution[s]' (Mukund, 1999, p. 31) for cultural and social activities and they 'created an interlocked social system, a synthesis of religious merit, social control and economic power' (Mukund, 1999, p. 27). The temple also housed the emblem of the *Cōḷa* dynasty i.e. *Naṭarāca Śivan*. It was at this temple that the coronation of king *Kulōttuṅga* II took place (Aiyangar, 2004, p. 319). Therefore, the renovation of the temple was to 'legitimize the status and the authority of the ruler' (Mukund, 1999, p. 27) as much as to fulfil the work started by his father. Such renovations were an exemplification of devotion to the God of the temple. These actions not only brought honour to the king but also acted as a social recognition of the king. This may have been the motive that led to the removal of the statues of minor gods, other than *Śiva*; He is not only the deity of the temple but also the very emblem of the *Cōḷa* dynasty. This may have been interpreted by the adherents of *Vaiṣṇavites* as intolerance and persecution by the king.

What is significant to the study at a deeper level is that the account of the reign of *Kulōttuṅga* II, as recounted in the *Periya Purāṇam* portrays the king as an ardent devotee of *Śiva* and a faithful adherent of the *Śaiva* pathway; it was he who renovated the temple

of *Citamparam* ‘with a gold roof’ restoring it to its pristine glory (PP.1218)³¹⁹. This suggests that the kingship was defined by its relation to the temple, ritual worship and allegiance to the *Śaivism*. Therefore, the suggested motive of *Cēkkiḷār* for the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam* was to convert the king, is a matter of some doubt. In the absence of *Cēkkiḷār* explicitly making any reference to the king’s preoccupation with *Jaina* erotic literature, which was for *Śaivites* a heretical text (Nilakanta Sastri and Srinivasachari, 1971, pp. 312-313) or the forcible removal of the image of *Viṣṇu*, then a more valid hypothesis is that this is deeper reason for the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam*.

However, what is significant in the account of king *Kulōttuṅga* II in the *Periya Purāṇam* is that it affirms the powerful presence of other religious traditions and of their influence especially of Jainism in *Tamiḷnāṭu*. The stories of controversies and contest between *nāyaṇmār* and others belonging to different faith traditions which are narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 1349-1416, 2502-2757, 2810-2828); these contests certainly form the high point of the conflict as *Cēkkiḷār* recorded them in his work. *Cēkkiḷār* also mentions debates and controversies apart from what is mentioned by *nāyaṇmār* themselves in their songs, sometimes at length and with considerable theological detail (PP. 2803-2824). Buddhism and Jainism are derogatorily referred to as ‘false’ and ‘alien’ or ‘foreign’ (‘பொய்த்தவர் சமண்சாக்கியர் புறத்துறை’: *poyttavār camaṇcākkiyār paratturai*) religions (PP. 2979)³²⁰, as though they have no rightful place on Tamil soil.

³¹⁹ ‘சென்னி அபயன் குலோத்துங்கச் சோழன் தில்லைத் திருஎல்லை பொன்னின் மயம் ஆக்கிய வளவர் போரேறு என்றும் புவிகாக்கும்’ (பெ.பு. 1218).

³²⁰ ‘அத்திறத்து முன்றிகழ்ந்தது திருஉள்ளத்து அமைத்துச் சித்தம் இன்புஉறு சிவநேசர்தம் செயல் வாய்ப்பப் பொய்த்தவர் சமண்சாக்கியர் புறத்துறை அழிய வைத்த அப்பெருங் கருணை

Whenever the Jains in particular are mentioned, it is to the accompaniment of disparaging epithets, and their religious observances are held up to scorn (PP. 2940)³²¹. Similarly, the Buddhist belief are reported unflatteringly, as not only false, but also overly intellectual, dry and lifeless (PP. 2828)³²². This leads us to investigate further the presence of these two religions and those controversies between *nāyaṇmār* and others belonging to different faith traditions as presented in the *Periya Purāṇam*, so as to understand events that might have had an impact on *Cēkkiḷār*'s motives in the creation of the *Periya Purāṇam*.

4.3 The *Nāyaṇmār*'s Encounters with Other Religious Traditions

At the time when the *Periya Purāṇam* was created, the two religions i.e. Jainism and Buddhism had their influence in *Tamiḷnāṭu* due to the royal patronage they enjoyed earlier when *nāyaṇmār* were active in propagating devotion to *Śiva* (PP. 980, 1358)³²³.

நோக்கால் மகிழ்ந்தருளி' (பெ.பு. 2979).

'The child listened with attention to the story of all that had happened, and looked graciously on the merchant sharing the hope that his heartfelt aspirations would be fulfilled, and that false and alien religions of Jainism and Buddhism would be rooted out' (PP. 2979).

³²¹ 'ஆனநாய்சேல அருமறைக் கவுணியர் பெருமான் ஞானபோனகம் நுகர்ந்ததும் நானிலம் உய்ய ஏனைவெம் சமண் சாக்கியம் இழித்து அழித்ததுவும் ஊனம்இல்புகழ் அடியர் பால்கேட்டு வந்துவளராய்' (பெ.பு. 2940).

'As the days went by, He heard from other devotees how the rare Brahmin child imbibed the divine wisdom and how he quelled the cruel Jains and Buddhist' (PP. 2940). The Tamil word that is used to depict adherent of Jainism and Buddhism as cruel is the word 'வெம்' (*vem*) i.e. வெம் சமண் சாக்கியம்' (*vem camaṇ cākkīyam*). The word 'வெம்' is equivalent to the Tamil word 'கொடிய' (*koḷiya*) both implying 'cruel'.

³²² 'பொந்தியினால் அவர் உரைத்த பொருளின் தன்மை பொருள் அன்று ஆம்படி அன்பர் பொருந்தக்கூற மந்தஉணர்வு உடையாரை நோக்கிச் சைவம் அல்லாது மற்றொன்றும் இல்லை என்றே அந்தம் இல்சீர் மறைகள் ஆகமங்கள் ஏனை...' (பெ.பு. 2828).

³²³ 'வல்லாண்மையின் வண்தமிழ்நாடு வளம் படுத்து நில்லாநிலை ஒன்றிய இன்மையின் நீண்ட மேரு வில்லான் அடிமைத்திறம் மேவிய திருநீற்றின் சார்பு செல்லாது அருகந்தர் திறத்தினில் சிந்தைதாழ்ந்தான்' (பெ.பு. 908).

'The new king took no pain to foster the prosperity of the Tamil land. Instead, he forsook the religion of Śiva and turned to the religion of the Jains' (PP. 980).

'விரை அலங்கல் பல்லவனும் அது கேட்டு வெகுண்டு எழுந்து புரையுடைய மனத்தினராய்ப் போவதற்குப் பொய்ப்பிணி கொண்டு உரைசிறந்த சமயத்தை அழித்துஒழியப் பெறுவதே குரை இல்தவத்தீர் இதனுக்கு என் செய்வது எனக்கனன்றான்' (பெ.பு. 1358).

Further, these two religions were also popular due to their better organisational skills and scholarly instructions of their leaders. Jain monasteries and Buddhist centres flourished as integrating places of their religion and learning (PP. 1308-1309, 2807)³²⁴. The wide acceptance of Jain belief and social practices is also evident by the conversions took place as narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 1305-1307)³²⁵. In fact *Cēkkiḷār*'s narration presents the dilemma of a man i.e. *Tirunāvukkaracar* caught between his desire to live a life full and the contrary tendency of renunciation. Thus two parallel movement towards life in all its variety, passion and the wish for the fulfilment of erotic and material desires;

'When he heard that, that *Pallava* king, with his scented garland rose to his feet in anger, "the blackguard!" he exclaimed, "On the pretext of some nonexistent illness, he has delivered a fatal blow to our noble religion! What can we do about it?" (PP. 1358).

Cēkkiḷār notes that at the time when *Tirunāvukkaracar* was exemplifying his devotion to *Śiva* the king himself practised Jainism and shielded the practitioners of Jainism as his own.

³²⁴ 'பாடலிபுத்திரம் என்னும் பதி அணைந்து சமண பள்ளி மாடு அணைந்தார் வல் அமணர் மருங்குஅணைந்து மற்றவர்க்கு வீடு அறியும் நெறி இதுவே என மெய்போல் தங்களுடன் கூடவரும் உணர்வு கொளக் குறிபலவும் கொளுவினார்'. (பெ.பு. 1308)
அங்கு அவரும் அமண சமயத்து அருங்கலைநூல் ஆன எல்லாம் பொங்கும் உணர்வு உறப்பயின்றே அந்நெறியில் புலன் சிறப்பத் துங்கமுழு உடல் சமணர் சூழ்ந்து மகிழ்வார் அவர்க்குத் தங்களின் மேலாம் தருமசேனர் எனும் பெயர்கொடுத்தார்' (பெ.பு. 1309).

'Following his decision, *Maruṇṇikkiyār* set out for the city of *Pāṭaliputtira*, and there joined a Jain seminary. The Jain scholars instructed him and his fellow students in their religion, as though this was the one true way to heaven.' (PP. 1308). 'With the Jains, *Maruṇṇikkiyār* studied all their religious texts and distinguished himself by his learning. The Jains were so pleased they awarded him the title of "*Dharmasēnar*". (PP. 1309).

'...சார்வுஅறியாச் சாக்கியர்தம் போதிமங்கை சார்தலும்' (பெ.பு. 2807)

'...he travelled on to the Buddhist centre of *Pōti Maṅkai*'... (PP. 2807).

³²⁵ 'மாகில் மனத்துயர் ஒழிய மருள் நீக்கியார் நிரம்பித் தேச நெறி நிலையாமை கண்டு அறங்கள் செய்வாராய்க் காசினிமேல் புகழ் விளங்க நிதி அளித்துக்கக் கருணையினால் ஆசில் அறச் சாலைகளும் தண்ணீர் பந்தரும் அமைப்பார்' (பெ.பு.1305)

'So *Maruṇṇikkiyār*'s grief abated. As he grew up, he realized the impermanence of worldly life and set himself to practise charity. He established centres where the poor could find lodging, food and drink, and so gained a wide reputation for generosity' (PP. 1305).

காவளர்த்தும் குளம் தொட்டும் கடப்பாடு வழுவாமல் மேவினர்க்கு வேண்டுவன மகிழ்ந்து அளித்தும் விருந்து அளித்தும் நாவலர்க்கு வளம் பெருக நல்கியும் நானிலத்து உள்ளோர் யாவர்க்கும் தவிராத ஈகைவினைத் துறைநின்றார்' (பெ.பு. 1306).

'He planted gardens, dug tanks, practised hospitality, supported poets, and freely met the needs of the deserving poor who came to him for help. He gave to all far and wide, without fear or favour' (PP. 1306).

'நில்லாத உலகியல்பு கண்டு நிலையா வாழ்க்கை அல்லேன் என்று அறத்துறந்து சமயங்கள் ஆனவற்றில் நல்லாறு தெரிந்து உணர் நம்பர் அருளாமையினால் கொல்லாமை மறைந்து உறையும் அமணசமயம் குறுகுவார்' (பெ.பு.1307).

'Through realizing that this world is impermanent, *Maruṇṇikkiyār* eventually came to feel that he had to put in such a life. So he gave up his practise of charity and turned to the study of religion, to determine which of them was the best. Because at this time *Śiva* not yet bestowed on his *aruḷ*, *Maruṇṇikkiyār* embraced the Jain religion, which forbids the killing of any creature' (PP. 1307).

and a tradition of renunciation, a moving away from life. The story of *Tirunāvukkaracar* embracing Jainism is an indication that Jainism had its appeal in *Tamiḷnāṭu*³²⁶.

Besides, Buddhism and Jainism which excised deep influence in the minds of the Tamils of that time took away from them many elements of religious practices that is familiar to *Tamiḷnāṭu* and introduced refined taste in religious matter (PP. 2818)³²⁷. They did not attach so much serious importance to the Vedas (PP. 1982)³²⁸ and offered a mode

³²⁶ The life of *Tirunāvukkaracar* is one of the poignant stories related in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 1270-1348). It is related seeing the sudden demise of his parents the *nāyaṇār* and realizing there impermanent nature of human life turned to Jainism. However, for *Cēkkiḷār*, the apparent reason is the ‘non - bestowal of *Śiva arul*’ (நம்பர் அருளாமையினால்) (PP. 1307). Owing to the serious efforts of his sister *Tilakavati*, he dissociated himself with the Jain and became protagonist of *Śiva* devotion. The Jain monk unaware of the fact that it was *Śiva* who enacted such conversion blamed the *nāyaṇār* of his audacious behaviour and accused him as an imposter. They prevailed on the *Pallava* king to persecute the *nāyaṇār*. The monks made the king believe that the *nāyaṇār* had denounced Jain way of life which was a serious offence to be viewed as breach of trust which was to be met with severe punishment. In the narration *Cēkkiḷār* presents the *nāyaṇār* adopting a passive resistance. This passive non-violent resistance against overwhelming odds appears to have been inspired by the Jain ideal of non-violence. *Cēkkiḷār* brings out this ideal of *Jains* in *Taṇṭi Aṭikaḷ Purāṇam* (PP. 3602).

‘கண்ட அமணர் பொறார்ஆகி எண்ணித் தண்டி அடிகள் பால் எய்தி முன்நின்று இயல்புவார் மண்ணைக் கல்லில் பிராணிபடும் வருந்த வேண்டா என்று உரைத்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 3602)

‘when the *Jains* saw they said “As you dig out the earth, living creatures are likely to get hurt,” they said, “on no account must you harm them’ (PP. 3602).

The Jain monks and the king tried to punish *Tirunāvukkaracar* in impudent ways. They put him in the lime kiln; made him drink the poison: instructed the royal elephant to kick away his head and finally threw him in the sea after tying him up with a stone. Paradoxically enough, the Jain ideal was victorious even though the *Jains* were the losers in the narration. *Cēkkiḷār*’s long narrative of *Tirunāvukkaracar*’s passive resistance in his hagiography is another example of the acceptance virtue of Jainism and its influence in *Tamiḷnāṭu*.

³²⁷ This is shown in the first verse of the debate opened by *Cāri Puttaṇ* has presented in the *Periya Purāṇam*.

‘தற்பகங்கள் அனைத்தினிலும் பிறந்து வீந்து கதிமாறும் கணபங்க இயல்பு தன்னில் பொற்புடைய தானமே தவமே தன்மை புரிந்தநிலை யோகமே பொருந்தச் செய்ய உற்பவிக்கும் ஒழிவுஇன்றி உரைத்த ஞானத்து ஒழியாதபேர் இன்பமுத்தி பெற்றான் பற்பலரும் பிழைத்து உய்ய அறம்முன் சொன்ன பான்மையான் யாங்கள் தொழும் பரமன் என்றான்’ (பெ.பு. 2818).

Here by *Cāri Puttaṇ* notes that ‘In very age, creatures are born, die and gain release in accord with the principle of continuous flux. A human can attain eternal wisdom and thereby win the everlasting bliss of deliverance by means of the appropriate practice of charity, austerity and yoga. He who for the deliverance of countless souls taught this path of righteousness is the one we worship’ (PP. 2818).

³²⁸ ‘வேதகாரணர் ஆய்வெண்பிறை சேர்செய்யாடை நாதன்நெறி அறிந்து உய்யார் தம்மிலே நலம் கொள்ளும் போதம்இலாச் சமண்கையர் புத்தர்வழி பழிஆக்கும் ஏதமே எனமொழிந்தார் எங்கள் பிரான் சம்பந்தர்’ (பெ.பு. 1982).

‘He also warned that the way of the *Jains* and *Buddhist* led to destruction. For they did not follow the way of the Lord, the author of the Vedas...’ (PP. 1982).

of deliverance through an austere path of non-violence, *yōga* and charity (PP. 2812)³²⁹ as against elaborated ritualism and temple worship. This rejection is evident in the narration of the life of *Tirunāvukkaracar* and in places where *Cēkkiḷār* exclaimed that it was they who hindered the *nāyaṇmār*'s worship of *Śiva* in the temples and ridiculed their manifestation of this devotion in service (PP. 991)³³⁰. Hence, the exigencies of Jainism and Buddhism were felt by the people who did not observe the ritualism of ancient scripture (PP. 1921)³³¹. These two religions were hailed as exemplifying man-centred religious practices rather than God-centred devotion as it is reiterated in the story of *Tirunāvukkaracar* (PP. 1307)³³². *Cēkkiḷār*'s reference to a well-known Jain formula '*Atti nātti*' ('அத்தி – meaning உள்ளது, உண்டு i.e. 'there is' and 'நாத்தி – meaning இல்லாதது, இல்லை i.e. 'there is not') (PP. 2717)³³³ shows that Jain philosophy did not attach so much significance to speculative metaphysics. Nevertheless, as presented in the story, Jainism especially attracted a significant number of followers because of its

³²⁹ '...தானமே 3தவமே தன்மை புரிந்தநிலை யோகமே...' (பெ.பு 2818).

³³⁰ *Cēkkiḷār* affirms Jainism as a heterodox tradition that sprang up as a reaction to ritualism. This he affirms while relating the story of King *Vaṭuka Karunāṭars* as the tyrant who cut off the supply of sandal wood for making paste for temple ritualism (PP. 991).

'காய்வு உற்ற செற்றம் கொடு கண்டகன் காப்பவும் சென்று ஆய்வு உற்ற கொட்பின்பகல் எல்லை அடங்க நாடி ஏய்வுற்ற நல் சந்தனம் எங்கும் பெறாது' (பெ.பு. 991).

It was they who refused to offer *Naminanti Aṭkaḷ* the oil to light the lamps in the temple (PP. 1879).

'...என்ன ஒழிந்தங்க ணைந்து ஓர் மனையில் விளங்க உறுநெய் வேண்டி உன்புகலும் ஆழிந்த நிலைமை அமணர்மனை ஆயிற்று...' (பெ.பு.1879).

³³¹ *Cēkkiḷār* records, the 'religions of Jainism and Buddhism were flourishing in the world, the way of life enjoined by the ancient scriptures was in decline, and the ritual of the holy was not observed even by the devotees of *Śiva*' (PP. 1921).

'மேதினிமேல் சமண்கையர் சாக்கியர்தம் பொய்மிகுத்தே ஆதிஅரு மறைவழக்கம் அருகிஅரன் அடியார்பால் பூதிசாதன விளக்கம் போற்றல் பெறாது ஒழியக்கண்டு ஏதம்இல்சீர் சிவபாத இருதயர்தாம் இடர்உழந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 1921).

³³² 'நில்லாத உலகியல்பு கண்டு நிலையா வாழ்க்கை அல்லேன் என்று அறத்துறந்து சமயங்கள் ஆனவற்றில் நல்லாறு தெரிந்து உணர் நம்பர் அருளாமையினால் கொல்லாமை மறைந்து உறையும் அமண்சமயம் குறுகுவார்' (பெ.பு.1307).

'Through realizing that this world is impermanent, *Maruṇṇikkīyār* eventually came to feel that he had to put in such a life. So he gave up his practise of charity and turned to the study of religion, to determine which of them the best was. Because at this time *Śiva* had not yet bestowed on his *aruḷ* (grace), *Maruṇṇikkīyār* embraced the Jain religion, which forbids the killing of any creature' (PP. 1307)

³³³ '...அடுபவர் பொருளை அத்தி நாத்தி என்று எழுதி ஆற்றில்...' (பெ.பு. 2717).

'...they wrote their formula *Atti nātti*'...' (PP. 2717).

philosophy of renunciation and non-violence. The ramification of this faith, their widespread movements and popularity was unchecked in the *Tamiḷnāṭu* for a long time.

At this point it may be questions as to why, even much longer after the age of the *nāyaṇmār*, *Cēkkiḷār* still did treat these religious as ‘alien’ (புறத்துறை: *puratturai*) (PP. 2979)³³⁴ ‘false’ (பொய்மிகுந்த: *poimikunta*) (PP.1921)³³⁵, and makes strenuous efforts to curb their growth as he makes engraved attacks on these beliefs, particularly on Jainism. *Cēkkiḷār* makes vituperative attack to call Jain monks as those ‘treacherous’ people (கையர்-வஞ்சகர் : *kaiyar vañcakar*) (PP. 986)³³⁶, ‘stout persons’ (குண்டர்கள்: *kuṇṭarkaḷ*) (PP. 990)³³⁷, ‘ignorant’ of what is good (நன்று அறியார் : *nanru ariyār*) (PP.1328)³³⁸, ‘senseless’ (உணர்வு இல்: *uṇarvu il*) (PP. 1370)³³⁹ and ‘black-hearted’ (அல் இருள் அன்னவர்: *al iruḷ aṇṇavar*) (PP. 1392)³⁴⁰.

Though highly contemptuous, these terms express the mind of *Cēkkiḷār*. Presumably, the reason for this is that in every tenth poem of *Tiruñāṇa Campantar’s* songs one find his polemics and scathing attack against and critical appraisal of Jainism

³³⁴ ‘பொய்த்தவர் சமண்சாக்கியர் புறத்துறை அழிய...’ (பெ.பு. 2979).

‘...that the alien Jainism and Buddhist would be rooted out...’ (PP. 2979).

³³⁵ ‘மேதினிமேல் சமண்கையர் சாக்கியர்தம் பொய்மிகுத்தே...’ (பெ.பு. 1921)

‘Because of the false religions of Jains and Buddhist were flourishing...’ (PP. 1921).

³³⁶ ‘தாழும் சமண் கையர் தவத்தை மெய் என்று சார்ந்து...’ (பெ.பு. 986).

‘Turned to the treacherous religion of the Jains...’ (PP. 986).

³³⁷ ‘புன்மைச் செயல் வல் அமண்குண்டரின் போது போக்கும்...’ (பெ.பு. 990).

‘The wicked spends all his time with stout Jain...’ (PP. 990).

³³⁸ ‘நன்று அறியா அமண் பாழி...’ (பெ.பு. 1328).

‘...enter the monastery of those ignorant Jain...’ (PP. 1328).

³³⁹ ‘...நாள் கழிந்ததன் பின் உணர்வு இல் அமணரை...’ (பெ.பு. 1370)

‘...one day he called the senseless Jains...’ (PP. 1370).

³⁴⁰ ‘...அல் இருள் அன்னவர் கூற...’ (பெ.பு. 1392).

‘The black-hearted Jain...’ (PP. 1392).

and Buddhism (Tēv. I.2.10)³⁴¹ : He is a *nāyaṇār* whom *Cēkkiḷār* adores as ‘our master, the prince of *Caṇpai*’s favour’ (‘எங்கள்பிரான் சண்பையர் கோன் அருளிநாலே’ : *eṅkaḷpirāṇ caṇpaiyār kōṇ aruḷiṇālē*) (PP. 4194), and ‘our master *Caṇpai*’ (‘எங்கள் சண்பை ஆண்டகையார்’ : *eṅkaḷ caṇpaiyār āṇṭaikayār*) (PP. 2381). *Cēkkiḷār* maintains that *Tiruñāṇa Campantar* was born due to the penances performed by his parents to foster and sustain *Śaivism* and to dethrone the overriding alien faiths. The very birth the *nāyaṇmār* is attributed to restrict the undue influence of the as ‘alien’ (புறத்துறை : *puratturai*) faiths and to stabilize the *Śaiva* faith throughout the world, according to *Cēkkiḷār* (PP. 1928)³⁴². For Peterson such polemics i.e. the ‘negative representation of the Jains was an important part of a process of self-definition and consolidation of power for the Tamil *Śaiva* sect,’ as a strategy of a greater cohesion among Tamils ‘a communal identity for Tamils, based on the celebration of *Śaiva* sectarian ideals and the exclusion of non-*Śaiva* ones’ (1998, p. 164-165).

On the other hand, what could be inferred from *Cēkkiḷār*’s narrative is that, he was concerned that Jainism and Buddhism are anti-theistic in their religious frame-work, hardly do they accept a devotion to a God and their soetrillogical way was incompatible with the devotion of the *nāyaṇmār*, their asceticism is thought to be antithetical to the strong naturalism of Tamils, i.e. Tamil’s love of the landscape rooted on *Caṅkam* poerty and the belief that *Śiva* dwells in them and through which devotional encounter with *Śiva*

³⁴¹ ‘செய்தவத்தர்மிகு தேரர்கள்சாக்கியர் செப்பிற்பொருளல்லாக் கைதவத்தர்மொழி...’ (தேவா.I.2.10). ‘Heedless of the deceit monks of Buddhism, servitors of the Lord hold high...(Tēv. I.2.10)

³⁴² ‘அவம்பெருக்கும்புல் அறிவின் அமண்முதல் ஆம்பரசமயப் பவம்பெருக்கும் புரைநெறிகள் பாழ்பட நல்ஊழிதொறும் தவம் பெருக்கும் சண்பையிலே தாஇல் சராசரங்கள் எலாம் சிவம்பெருக்கும் பிள்ளையார் திருஅவதாரம் செய்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 1929).

‘So it came about the child of God was born at *Caṇpai*, where austerities were practised in abundance from age to age. Through him all creatures were to attain *Śiva*, and Jainism and those other base religions which propagate falsehood and cause sin to abound came to their downfall’ (PP. 1929).

is made possible. As the *nāyaṇmār*, whom *Cēkkiḷār* venerates, brought up with religious zeal admitting a devotion to *Śiva* heavily rooted in *Caṅkan* classics which served to connect them with through their travels to the Tamil region as a ‘sacred geography’ and the Lord whom they approached as Tamil God on intimate terms as child, friend or slave to control and guide their lives, *Cēkkiḷār* could not patronise other religions which were not intimately connected to the Tamil land. In narrating the re-conversion of *Tirunāvukkaracar* to *Śaivism*, *Cēkkiḷār* states, Jainism is a system that neither believed in the possibility of divine intervention nor in a God who is at work within the human soul. It is a religion that trusted in the ‘magical art’ (மந்திர சாதகம்: *mantira cātakam*) of their mantras to cure sickness and disease and thereby to establish their foreign ideology (PP. 1372)³⁴³ with suspect influence in royal courts. Their religious ethos is world-denying and renunciation, making them theatricalely impossible to be as intimately connected with Tamil culture as of the *nāyaṇmār*.

Cēkkiḷār concludes Jainism is a path that is ‘devoid of personal piety’ (PP. 3603)³⁴⁴. The path of deliverance for them rests with the individual. Whereas the *nāyaṇmār* composed poems in praise of their deity *Śiva*, frequently using poems accessible to the masses. For *Cēkkiḷār* there is nothing in early Jain religious practices that comes closer to the devotional aestheticism of *nāyaṇmār*, its exaltation of the personal, ecstatic experience of *Śiva* and in the exuberant expression of love, *nāyaṇmār*

³⁴³ ‘அதிசயம் அன்று இது முன்னை சமண்சமயச் சாதகத்தால் இது செய்து பிழைத்து இருந்தான்...’ (பெ.பு. 1372).

‘This is not a surprise. He has survived by means of the magic arts he used to practise in the Jain religion...’ (PP. 1372.).

³⁴⁴ ‘...திருஇலிகாள் பூசுநீறு சாந்தம் எனப் புனைந்த பிரானுக்கு ஆனபனி...’ (பெ.பு. 3603).

expressions of devotion contained characteristics which were uniquely bound with the classical culture and aesthetic of the Tamils. The religious and cultural contexts of *Śiva* were more congenial to the spirit of a new personal religion in the framework of Tamil civilization than Buddhism and Janism.

It is noteworthy that a religion can flourish and sustain any ordeal provided it has spiritually awakened scholars, illumined saints like that of *nāyaṇmār* and the lofty ideals to be adhered to devotedly. Instead, if violent and coercive methods are freely adopted to spread the ideals, then that religion would decline naturally. For *Cēkkiḷār* Jain monks adopted maligned ways to establish their religion and propagate their doctrines by making use of dubious means and royal patronage. This is clearly evident of the story of *Campantar* as narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam*³⁴⁵. *Cēkkiḷār* mocks at the Jain for

³⁴⁵ ‘The Jains, according to the *Cēkkiḷār*’s narrative, lost two contest with *Campantar*, after he cured the *Pāṇṭiya* king of his sickness by singing praises to *Śiva*. One had to do with a test of fire, and another of water. In the first test, the *nāyaṇār*’s palm script on which was inscribed the glory of *Śiva*, survived the fire, while the palm leaves containing the tenets of Jain creed were consumed in a fire. In the second test, known as the contest by water, yet another poem of *Campantar*’s verses was successfully drifted upstream against the powerful current of the *vaikai* river, while the Jain inscribed leaves were hopelessly washed downstream. It is after these two losses that the Jain were impaled. However the scene of the contest between the two opposing forces contending for supremacy in *Tamiḷnāṭu* is one of great significance. It marked the turning point of the ascendancy of *Śaivism*. *Campantar* inscribed on the palm leaves the first verses of the *Tiruppācuram Ode*:

‘May enlightened Antanar prosper: Hail gods and cows as well,
May refreshing showers of rain increase the land’s plenitude!
May the upright king reign supreme! Let evil force perish;
May all reflect on Haran’s Name, that the world be free from fearful woes’ (Tēv. III. 054.1)
‘வாழ்க அந்தணர் வானவ ரானினம் வீழ்க தண்புனல் வேந்தனு மோங்குக
ஆழ்க தீயதெல் லாமர னாமமே சூழ்க வையக முந்துயர் தீர்கவே’ (தேவா. III. 054.1)

The ten scintillating verses commended on in great detail by *Cēkkiḷār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 2725-2746) sum up the fulfilment of the *Śiva* way of life, and his closing line is indeed memorable:

‘The one who tasted the milk of wisdom proclaims that the
Highest illumination is attainable by those who are full of the
Love of *Śiva*’ (PP.2746)

‘...ஞானம் ஈசன்பால் அன்பே என்றனர் ஞானம் உண்டார்’ (பெ.பு.2746).

The animosity which again these religion which one find in the poems of *Campantar* and *Tirunāvukkaracar* is not found in the poem of in the poems of *Cuntaramūrti nāyaṇār* and hence the occasion does not arise for *Cēkkiḷār* to describe *Cuntaramūrti*’s efforts for the extinction of other faith in *Tamiḷnāṭu*. This saint finds more comfort and leisure in worshipping *Śiva* at several temples without any

hypocrites, since contrary to their preaching of non-killing and refraining from falsehood; they indulged in evil deeds (PP. 2537)³⁴⁶. *Cēkkiḷār* narrates with deep revulsion of the Jain ascetic practices of nudity, tonsure, and unhygienic practices such as abstaining from bathing and cleaning the teeth (PP. 2538)³⁴⁷. Their religious ethos is characterised in this account as pessimistic, anti-social, puritanical, and un-*Tamiḷ*; it serves, as *Cēkkiḷār* presents as backdrop for *nāyaṇmār*'s reaction – a joyful, inclusive, world affirming, and wholly Tamil devotional pathway to *Śiva* (PP. 1462)³⁴⁸.

The hagiographical account of *Cēkkiḷār* suggests that the *nāyaṇmār* had to compete with not only Jainism but also with Buddhism to popularize their devotion to *Śiva*. While narrating a heated argument between a Buddhist monk, *Cāri Puttaṇ* and *Campantar*, *Cēkkiḷār* reveals his poignancy of debate focusing of the splendour of *Śaivism*, while pointing out the inefficient and inadequate nature of Buddhist doctrine (PP 2805-2829) from a devotional perspective. Buddhism is presented through this debate as a system that believed in the principle of continuous flux, in a cycle of rebirth (பிறந்து வீந்து கதிமாறும்) (PP. 2818)³⁴⁹. The deliverance from this cycle of rebirth is possible

tension whatsoever. For the *Tirupasuram* (திருப்பாசரம்) and for *Cēkkiḷār*'s commentary on it, see Appendix IV.

³⁴⁶ 'கந்தியாரர் தம்மில் தாமே கனன்று எழு கலாங்கள் கொள்ள வந்தவாறு அமணர் தம்மில் மாறு கொண்டு ஊறு செய்ய முந்தைய உரையில் கொண்ட பொறை முதல் வைப்பம் விட்டுச் சிந்தையில் செற்றம் முன்ஆம் தீக்குணத் தலையின்றார்கள்' (பெ.பு. 2537).

'Their female ascetics began to quarrel angrily among themselves. Their monks fell out and attacked one another. They forsook the virtues such as patience advocated by their ancient texts. Instead they became enraged and displayed evil traits of character without restraint' (PP. 2537).

³⁴⁷ '...ஊத்தை வாயினையும் மயிர் பறித்த தலையினையும்முடைய அவ்வமணர்...' (பெ.பு. 2660). 'fouled mouth and shaven headed Jains...' (PP. 2660).

³⁴⁸ '...அன்பினோடு மறிவிரவு கரத்தாரை வணங்கி வைகி வண்தமிழ் பாமாலை மகிழ்ச் சாத்திப்...' (பெ.பு. 1462).

³⁴⁹ 'கற்பகங்கள் அனைத்திலும் பிறந்து வீந்து கதிமாறும் கணபங்க இயல்பு தன்னில் பொற்புடைய தானமே தவமே தன்மை புரிந்தநிலை யோகமே பொருந்தச் செய்ய உற்பவிக்கும் ஒழிவுஇன்றி உரைத்த ஞானத்து ஒழியாதபேர் இன்பமுத்தி பெற்றான்

through ‘charity, austerity and *yōga*’ (தானமே தவமே தன்மை புரிந்தநிலை யோகமே: *tāṇamē tavamē taṇmai pāintanilai yōkamē*). The one who taught this path is the one Buddhist ‘worship’ as ‘person of noble character’ (தொழும் பரமன்: *toḷum paraman*).³⁵⁰ The nature of such deliverance is the ‘annihilation of all the five faculties’ (PP. 2819)³⁵¹. The one who taught this path ‘with the disappearance of the body’ ... ‘rests totally absorbed in a state of deliverance’ ... ‘he can have no perception’ (PP. 2816)³⁵².

However, such understanding and explanation of *Cāri Puttan* about the ‘one who taught’ the path as one who ‘rests totally absorbed in a state of deliverance’ posed a fundamental problem for *Campantar*. He wonders how could one build a temple, make an image of him and offer ritual worship to such a person. If one were to believe that all five senses including wisdom cease to operate in the path of deliverance; If ‘one who taught’ this path has no organs of senses in his state of deliverance, and if he has no

பற்பலரும் பிழைத்து உய்ய அறம்முன் சொன்ன பான்மையான் யாங்கள் தொழும் பரமன் என்றான்’ (பெ.பு. 2818).

‘In every age creatures are born, die and are reborn according to this principle. One can gain eternal wisdom and thereby win everlasting bliss of deliverance from this cycle of rebirth. This is possible, by the proper practice of charity, austerity and yoga. The one who taught this path of enlightenment is the deity we adore’ (PP. 2818).

³⁵⁰ *Cāri Puttan*’s reference to the one who taught this path as ‘பரமன்’ (*paraman*) is quite puzzling. The word ‘பரமன்’ in Tamil is used to signify a ‘person of noble of character’ and in reference to ‘supreme being’ (Tamil Lexicon University of Madras, pp. 983, 2501). Since, Buddhist do not consider the one who taught the path of deliverance as a God, *Cāri Putta*’s must used the word ‘பரமன்’ in reference to the one who taught that path as a ‘person of noble of character’. However, the usage of the word ‘worship’(தொழும்) is a sign that there might have risen a devotional cult centred on the one who taught the path of deliverance to whom *Cāri Puttan* makes reference.

³⁵¹ ‘...நின்றஉரு வேதனையே குறிப்புச் செய்கை நேர்கின்ற ஞானம் என நிகழ்ந்த ஐந்தாம் ஒன்றிய கந்தது அவிவே முத்தி என்ன...’ (பெ.பு. 2819).

³⁵² ‘கந்தம்ஆம் வினை உடம்பு நீங்கி எம்கோன் கலந்துளான் முத்தியில் என்றான் என்னக் கானும் இந்திரியங் கண்முதல் ஆம் கரணம் தானும் இல்லையேல் அவன் உணர்ச்சி இல்லை என்றார்’ (பெ.பு. 2821).

perception and is indifferent to all that is happening, who then will receive the worship of a devotee? How could one develop a deeper union with such a person? (PP. 2820).³⁵³

The response to such dilemmas of *Campantar* is provided in the counter argument of *Cāri Puttaṇ*. He explains that when a person is in a deep sleep, he is bereft of consciousness; if a person disturbs him, it is the one who disturbs the one who is asleep who receives the fruit of the action. In this same way *Cāri Puttaṇ* argued, someone who worships the ‘one who taught the path of deliverance’ and in the ‘state of bliss’, even though he has no perception through the senses, will gain his due reward. Even if the one, who disturbed the sleeper was to kill the one who is asleep, although the sleeper is in a state of total indifference, his life would be extinguished and the one who disturbed him would be guilty of murder. So it is with in the ‘state of bliss’: he is affected by all that happens to him, although he lacks all perception like the sleeper (PP. 2821-2822)³⁵⁴.

Yet again for *Campantar* as recalled in the *Periya Purāṇam*, such an example fails to present the truth. If one were to believe that one who is in the state of bliss will be affected, as argued by *Cāri Puttaṇ* in the example, one needs bodily senses to respond, even if he is asleep. So it is with one who is the state of bliss. If the five senses were not

³⁵³ ‘...தாங்கிய ஞானத்துடன் ஆம்கந்தம் ஐந்தும் தாம்வீந்து கெட்டனவேல் தலைவன் தானும் ஈங்கு உள்ளென்று அவனுக்கு விடயம் ஆக யாவையும் முன்இயற்றுதற்கு விகாரமே செய்து ஒங்குவடிவு அமைத்து விழவு எடுக்கும் பூசை கொள்வார் ஆர்உரைக்க என உரைக்கல் உற்றான்’ (பெ.பு. 2820).

³⁵⁴ ‘கந்தம்ஆம் வினை உடம்பு நீங்கி எம்கோன் கலந்துளன் முத்தியில் என்றான் என்னக் கானும் இந்திரியங் கண்முதல் ஆம் கரணம் தானும் இல்லையேல் அவன் உணர்ச்சி இல்லை என்றார் முந்தை அறிவுஇலன் ஆகி உறங்கினானை நிந்தித்து மொழிந்து உடல்மீது ஆடினார்க்கு வந்தவினைப் பயன்போல வழிபட் டார்க்கும் வரும் அன்றே நன்மை என மறுத்துச் சொன்னான்’ (பெ.பு. 2821).
சோன்ன உரைகேட்டருளி அன்பர் தாமும் தொடர்ந்த வழிபாடு பல கொள்கின்றானுக்கு அன்னவற்றின் உடன்பாடும் எதிர்வும் இல்லை என்றார் முன்அவற்றில் உடன்பாடும் எதிர்வும் இன்றி முறுகுதியில் உற்றானை முனிந்து கொன்றால் இன்உயிர் போய்க்கொலை ஆகிமுடிந்தது அன்றோ இப்படியால் எம்இறைவாற்கு எய்தும் என்றான்’ (பெ.பு. 2822).

functioning, the one who is the state of bliss would not have attained everlasting deliverance. Therefore, whereas human senses are devoid of consciousness, there can be no enjoyment of the bliss of deliverance (PP. 2823)³⁵⁵. Such persuasive reasoning makes *Campantar* believe that there is no substance in such a belief. He concluded that the Buddhist belief system relies on human intelligence rather than in the truth conveyed in the Vedas (PP. 2828)³⁵⁶. The Buddhists emphasis on the annihilation of the senses denies the aspects of devotion and the meaningfulness of such practices.

Through the narration of this philosophical dispute *Cēkṇilār* notes that the truth of *Śaivism* was established conclusively which made several Buddhists too converted them into the *Śaiva* fold (PP. 2827)³⁵⁷. That the debates and controversies with Jainism and Buddhism was intense is evidenced by the numerous derogatory references, as noted, *Cēkṇilār* himself makes to Jainism and Buddhism in his work. In several places *Cēkṇilār* approvingly narrates the biographies of the *nāyaṇmār* who would die, surrender everything to spread their devotion to *Śiva*. Beneath their pleasant, sounding surface, therefore, the *Periya Purāṇam* attest to a self-conscious and aggressive *Śaivism* in times of *nāyaṇmār*.

³⁵⁵ 'இப்படியால் எய்தும் எனஇசைத்து நீஇங்கு எடுத்துக்காட்டிய துயிலும் இயல்பினான் போல் மெய்ப்படிய கரணங்கள் உயிர் தாம் இங்கு வேண்டுதியால் நும்இறைவற்கு ஆனபோது செப்பிய அக்கந்தத்தின் விளைவு இன்று ஆகித் திரிவுஇல்லா முத்தியில் சென்று இவனும் ஆனான் அப்படிஅக் கந்தத்துள் அறிவும் கெட்டால் அம்முத்தியுடன் இன்பம் அணையாது என்றார்' (பெ.பு. 2823).

³⁵⁶ 'பொந்தியினால் அவர் உரைத்த பொருளின் தன்மை பொருள் அன்று ஆம்படி அன்பர் பொருந்தக்கூற மந்தஉணர்வு உடையாரை நோக்கிச் சைவம் அல்லாது மற்றொன்றும் இல்லை என்றே அந்தம் இல்சீர் மறைகள் ஆகமங்கள் ஏனை...' (பெ.பு. 2828).

³⁵⁷ '...அழிபுத்தர்களும் பணிந்து வீழ்ந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 2827).
'...Buddhist too bowed low before his lotus feet' (PP. 2827).

What is remarkable for *Cēkḱilār*, however, the *nāyaṇmār* did not find any personal gain in their resistance to other religious traditions. They intended that their own inherited religious faith should not be driven to oblivion, but should regain and natural aspiration since it is an aspiration not born out of a heated brain but from the hearts of the ones who had experienced love of *Śiva*. Their attempt to exterminate the other religious traditions may be attributed to their noble gesture that the bliss which they enjoyed in their devotion to *Śiva* should be equally enjoyed by all for which sincere devotion become essential. Hence, it is not merely the intensity of the controversy with Jainism and Buddhism but it is the way that was adopted by the *nāyaṇmār* both in form and content of their poems that reveals their concern for the ordinary people as opposite to the ideals of both Jainism and Buddhism, which are first and foremost monastic traditions devoid of personal devotion.

The resulting literary works i.e. the devotional literature which developed out of their spontaneous expression of the divine experience contain a rich theological and philosophical teaching related to their belief system i.e. in the case of *nāyaṇmār*; *Śaivism*. They were intended not only to revive the temple ritualism but also propagate a new ideology by drawing on elements from Tamil culture. They drew on *Purānas*, *Āgamas* and especially *Vedānta* as taught in the Upanishads to create ‘intensely human religious awareness’ (Hardy, 1983, p. iii) among the ordinary people through their common language Tamil.

The dominant theme of their ideology, however, was devotion specific to a personal God. With their songs in Tamil ‘for the first time ... devotion was expressed in a mother tongue’ (Carman and Narayanan, 1989, p. 14); the religious life became independent of the burden of knowledge of Sanskrit (Mittal and Thursby, 2006, p. 27) and ‘the lower classes to whom the ambiguities of *Vedānticism* and their hair-splitting obscurities of the theologians and the philosophers were too much, readily accepted a cult which opened the way to salvation’ (Chavan, 1991, p. 7). Through the medium of Tamil, which unlike Sanskrit was a spoken language identified with powerful emotions, the inaccessible God of the Upanishads was brought closer to ordinary devotees, irrespective of their caste and creed. They were directed to an accessible personal Lord i.e. *Śiva* with expressions ‘fraught with tender words used for beloved ones’ (Carman and Narayanan, 1989, p. 14). Humans were equated in the temple of God and were considered worthy instruments to realize the highest reality. Thus, infused by devotion and love of God, vernacular religions began to flourish in Tamil society.

The devotional ideology that was propagated by the *nāyaṇmār* is intended to make *Śaivism* the religion of the people as against Buddhism and Jainism. They insisted on making devotion as the emblem of Tamil culture and the spirit of Tamil religion. It did bring a ‘great, many-sided shift’ (Ramanujan, 1981, p. 3) to temple worship in a latter period and rituals were reworked to include an iconography especially in the mystical poems as pathways to union with the divine. In the course of time, as society was restructured along the path of devotion, the devotional poems of these *nāyaṇmār* were

collected into anthologies; they were canonized as *Tirumurai* or sacred scriptures and were elevated to the status of Vedas, equal to that of Sanskrit Vedas.

The impact created by the poet saints was so great; they became champions of culture and religion whose lives were considered worthy of emulation. It is their lives that became central to the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam*, whose stories were utilized by *Cēkkiḷār* to elucidate the manifestation of this devotion in service and moral living. These saints were also considered as divine in origin and were instruments in God's hands and showed the unity that existed between them and God. It conveyed that the religious experience of the saints as vehicles through which one could attain God. The songs of the poets became vehicles for the ordinary people to identify their own religious experience³⁵⁸. They became a medium of expression of one's devotion, expressed in the vernacular language.

It should be mentioned that in the absence of the unified order, and not having even fraternity of monks like the Buddhist and the Jains had in *Śaivism*, *Cēkkiḷār* also emphasises that the *nāyaṇmār* took recourse to creating a bond between the 'servitors of *Śiva*' or '*aityarkal*' (அடியார்கள்) - by this means there evolved a new feeling of community, to wean the people from the more organised Buddhist and Jains. It is by understanding this phenomenon that one can understand *Cēkkiḷār* narration of *Śiva* commanding *Cuntaramūrti nāyaṇār* to compose the hymns in honour of the nature of the

³⁵⁸ For Peterson these poems which are expressions of the divine experience of God are examples of their relationship with god. In this way they help to establish a relationship between the audience for whom the poems were intended and the deity in whose glory the songs were sung (1982, p. 81).

service which the devotees perform and their greatness (PP. 343)³⁵⁹. In response to request of *Śiva* he sang the famous *Tirut Toṇṭar Tokai* (திருத்தொண்டத் தொகை) i.e. ‘The Roll of the Holy Servants’ in praise of all the devotees of *Śiva*. Hence the grouping of the ‘servitors of the *Śiva*’ and of temple they visited acted as sacred networks of communication providing an indefinable bond in an otherwise nebulous faith system.

The *Periya Purāṇam* specially acclaims the glory of such men and women mentioned in *Tirut Toṇṭar Tokai*. They came from every caste; *Gaṇanāta nāyaṇār* from the *Brāmin* caste (PP. 3928-3924); *Kaṇampulla* from the outcastes (PP. 4060-4068); *Kalikkapa* from the merchant class (PP. 4017 - 4026) and chieftain of piety called *Kūrruvaṇār* (PP. 3935-3943). They included people who followed menial occupations such as a hunter called *Kaṇṇappar* (PP. 650-830) and weavers such as *Nēca nāyaṇār* (PP. 4197-4201). They included men such as *Appūti Aṭikal* (PP. 1788-1832) and women such as *Icaiñāṇi Ammaiṇār* (PP. 4233)³⁶⁰.

Though the hymns of the *nāyaṇmār* did not propagate a specific form of temple ritual worship, many episodes of the *nāyaṇmār* frequenting temples as narrated by *Cēkkiḷār* suggest the significance of the temple in times of the composition of his work (PP. 1585-1586)³⁶¹. This tension between personal devotion to *Śiva* as propagated by the

³⁵⁹ ‘நாதனார் அருளின் செய்ய நம்பி ஆருரர் நான் இங்கு ஏதம் நீர் நெறியைப் பெற்றேன் என்று எதிர்வணங்கிப் போற்ற நீதியால் அவர்கள் தம்மைப் பணிந்து நீற்றை சொல்மாலை கோதுஇலா வாய்மையாலே பாடுஎன அண்ணல் கூற’ (பெ.பு. 343).

‘On hearing this, Nampi exclaimed, “Now I have set my feet upon the path that leads to freedom from all ill,” and with that his heart was filled with praise and gratitude. Then the Lord addressed him again with a further command: “In honour of my devotees with unfeigned devotion sing a garland of praise” (PP. 343).

³⁶⁰ For the complete details of the caste affiliation of the *nāyaṇmār*, see Appendix I.

³⁶¹ ‘காதல் செய்யும் கருத்தினுடன் காடும் மயலயம் கான்யாரும் ... பலவும் கடந்து ...தொண்டை நல்நாடு எய்தி ... திருஓத்தூர்த் தேவர் பிரானார்தம் கோயில்’ (பெ.பு. 1585-1586).

nāyaṇmār and temple ritualism is very much evident in the *Cēkkiḷār*'s work. Hence, this needs investigation.

4.4 The *Nāyaṇmār* and the Temple Worship

Many of the episodes of the *nāyaṇmār* frequenting temples as narrated by *Cēkkiḷār* prove the *nāyaṇmār* wished to propagate their devotion to *Śiva* centred around the temples (PP. 4202-4219)³⁶². The *nāyaṇmār*'s lives, as envisaged by *Cēkkiḷār*, commence, proceed with and culminate in a *Śiva* temple; large part of the stories are devoted to the account of their journeys to worship at shrines. Thus we see that temples are inextricably interwoven in the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* (PP. 2522-2580)³⁶³. They made temple worship a popular movement and promoted goodwill among masses, exalting the attributes of *Śiva* (PP. 1516)³⁶⁴ in exquisite poetry, music and dance (PP. 1442)³⁶⁵. The *nāyaṇmār* did not

‘Moved by loving devotion, Tirunāvukkaracar traversed and mountains and rivers, and many towns with fields... At length he drew near to famous Toṇṭai land, and there came to Tiruvōttūr, there he entered the temple of the Lord’ (PP. 1585-1586)

³⁶² In the narration of the life of *Kōcceaṇkaṭ Cōḷa Cēkkiḷār* records that this king ruled the earth in the path of virtue and devotion. In his kingdom, there was an elephant that offered worship to the Lord with flowers. There was also a spider that worshiped God faithfully according to its merit. One day, the spider stood worshipping the Lord. It spun a web over the Lord's head to protect him from falling leaves from the trees and from the rays of the sun. When the elephant saw what the spider had done, it found it unholy and destroyed the web. The spider was indignant and in anger entered the trunk of the elephant causing its death. The Lord *Śiva* moved by the devotion shown by these two animals blessed them in grace. In the same episode *Cēkkiḷār* narrates the spider came to be born as a king. The king went on to construct temples and gave donations for the maintenance with a heart full of devotion.

³⁶³ *Campanar* reached Madurai on the invitation of the queen to arrest the religious intrusion and the political interference of the *Jains* who were overpowering the region. The moment he reached the vicinity of Madurai the first thing he did was to enquire about the *Tiruvālavāy* temple. As soon as he entered the temple, he worshipped the Lord with ever increasing love and praised Him with inspiring hymns. Before he launched his challenge with his religious opponents, he paid a second visit to the temples to seek the blessings of his beloved Lord to triumph over them. After the successful completion of his laudable mission, he worshipped the Lord again in the temple expressing gratitude. At *Cirkāḷi* temple the young saint drank divine milk and became the very embodiment of wisdom. Finally he attained liberation with his follower men at *Nallūrpperumaṇam* temple (PP. 2522-2580).

³⁶⁴ ‘திருநீலநக்கடிகள் சிறுத்தொண்டர் முருகனார் பெருநீர்மை அடியார்கள் பிறரும் விடை கொண்டு ஏக ஒருநீர்மை மனத்து உடைய பிள்ளையாருடன் அரசும் வருநீர் செஞ்சடைக் கரந்தார் திருஅம்பர் வணங்கினார்’ (பெ.பு. 1516).

deliver discourses on the temples through their poems but they sang sweetly and spontaneously on *Śiva*. *Cēkkiḷār* demonstrates many acts of lowly service in the temples precincts performed by the *nāyaṇmār* with the spirit of sacrifice, love and service as offering to the Lord whose patronage they enjoyed in the temples (PP. 1440)³⁶⁶. Their experience have proved beyond doubt the efficacy of temple centred worship, the incantation of the name of *Śiva* and service leading to joy of being with *Śiva* enhancing the ennobling devotion that actuated these receptive *nāyaṇmār*.

Nonetheless, the *nāyaṇmār* themselves did not propagate a specific form of temple ritualism but rather practices based on instinctive, aesthetic, and moral values (PP. 1211-1270).³⁶⁷ It is the temple priest, whose ritualism was considered heredity and

‘Tirunīlanakkar, Cīruttonṭar, Murukaṇār and other distinguished devotees took leave and went their way. In a spirit of close accord Piḷḷaiyār and Tirunāvukkaracar went off to Tiruvampar together, and there offered worship’ (PP. 1516)

³⁶⁵ ‘மேவிய பணிகள் செய்து விளங்கும் நாள் வேட்களத்துச் சேடயர் கொடியார் தம்மைச் சென்று முன்வணங்கிப் பாடிக் காவி அம்கண்டர் மன்னும் திருக்கழிப்பாவை தன்னில் நாவினுக்கு அரசர் சென்று நண்ணினார் மன்னோர் வாழ’ (பெ.பு. 1442).

‘There he fell at the feet of the Lord, and sang the hymn “Her pretty coral-red lips murmur, ‘he is the ruler of the gods’, and other hymns like it, in language inspired by his devotion. While staying there engaged in worship and in service, his thoughts turned again to *Tiruppuliyūr*” (PP. 1442).

³⁶⁶ ‘...கூடிய பணிகள் செய்து கும்பிடும் தொழில் ஆகிப் பாடிய புனிதவாக்கின் பணிகளும் பயிலச் செய்வார்’ (பெ.பு. 1440)

‘...Tirunāvukkaracar performed what service he could, as enjoined by the hymn that he himself sang, and made worship as daily occupation’ (PP. 1440).

³⁶⁷ This is observed in the narration of the life of *Caṇṭēcura Purāṇam* (PP. 1211-1270) in the *Periya Purāṇam*. It is narrated, that the city of *Cēyṇālūr* was the home of the temple priests. They were of one mind in their worship and ritual practices. There lived a man called *Eccatattan* who had a child named *Vicāra Caruman*. For the glory of the Vedas and for the good of the *Brāhmins*, the child blossomed into the practice of chanting the Vedas and *Tirumurai*. Such devotional discipline increased his love and awe for *Śiva*. The fascination led him in truthful love to construct an image of the Lord out of sand. As that longing, love and worship grew to full measure; the Lord himself became fully present in the abode and accepted the worship offered to him. When the temple priest, who had become accustomed to ritualism, complained to the boy’s father about the profanity of such worship, he, the father of the boy in anger destroyed the pot of milk prepared for worship. When the boy realized what had happened, he cut off his father’s legs with an axe felling him to the ground. It is narrated, that the axe was used as a means of removing the obstacles to his prayer. It was by the Lord’s grace such an act was carried out to show the importance of the personal relationship with God which transcends mere ritualism. The boy taught the entire world, the significance of proper devotion rather than mere ritualism. Practices promulgated by the *nāyaṇmār* based on scripture, aesthetic, instinctive and moral would be discussed later.

professional according to the traditional values³⁶⁸, had the right to perform ritual worship. Those who were not worthy of performing such rituals, because of the norms established by tradition, were denied entrance to the temple – a central concern in the narration of the life of *Tirunālaippōvār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 1046-1082)³⁶⁹.

Such a demarcation though religious in nature as James Heitzman points out also reflects the significance given to individuals within the political and the economical climate of the time (1991, p. 24). As illustrated in the story of *Tirunālaippōvār* in the *Periya Purāṇam*, rituals centred on temple worship became symbolic expressions of actual social relations i.e. to the extent of defining the status of the role of the individual in the temple. As Heitzman comments, such symbolic functions of the rituals are to be considered as ‘patterns of ritual integration’ build on the ‘idea of ritual polity’ (1991, p. 24). In fact, they not only legitimized the activities of the ruling class but also classified into different levels, the participation of and the stratification of the society i.e. into ‘segmentary states’ (Stein, 1980, pp. 264-285) according to the political and economic significance of participants in the ritual action (Heitzman, 1991, p. 24)³⁷⁰. Hence, the temple and ritual actions became a testimony to the vested political power of the rulers as well as to the economic interest of the temple priests.

³⁶⁸ Vincentnathan suggests that participation in temple ritualism and ritual behaviour demanded of an individual within the Tamil community was fixed by traditional rules, found in *varnāśramadharmā* i.e. ‘religious-moral system of caste duties based on caste structure’ (Vincentnathan, 1993, p. 161). Though, the origin of this traditional rule found in *varnāśramadharmā* is not known, certainly it could be assumed that it served to legitimize variation based on family ritual practices, racial differences and occupational specializations.

³⁶⁹ For brief narration of the life of this *nāyaṇār*, see p.13.

³⁷⁰ While describing the town planning system of *Kāñchi* town, *Cēkkiḷār* vividly shows that the people lived in their respective provinces as groups stipulated by their conception of superior or inferior nature of the caste into which they were born. The types of arrangement of social set up have a bearing on duties based on one’s station (PP. 1183-1191).

Significantly, these temple priests are given pride of place in *Cēkḱilār's Periya Purāṇam*. *Cēkḱilār* dedicates a whole section in praise of the priest who live in *Tillai* - 'the Brahmins of *Tillai*' (தில்லைவாழ் அந்தனர் புராணம்: *tillaivāḷ antaṇar purāṇam*). *Cēkḱilār* not only praise and honour them but also emphasises that these priests at *Tillai* distinguished and differentiated themselves in several ways. They are zealous in fulfilling the service proper to their caste and the duties of their office in the temple (PP. 353)³⁷¹; their lineage is unblemished (PP. 355)³⁷²; they serve the Dancing *Śiva* who wears the sacred ash by the knowledge of their Vedic scriptures (PP. 352)³⁷³; they count their love for the Lord *Śiva* as the greatest blessing of their lives (PP. 355)³⁷⁴; they maintain the three fires for the betterment of living creatures (PP. 354)³⁷⁵; they remain without rival, without peer (PP. 357)³⁷⁶. *Cēkḱilār* even emphasises that there is nothing greater can be said of them beyond the fact that they have been placed first in *Cuntarar's Tirut Toṇṭar Tokai* i.e. 'The Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord' poem (PP. 358)³⁷⁷.

What should be noted however, all what is said of these priests at *Tillai* is not of praise, *Cēkḱilār* present them as the ones who obstructed the devotion of *Tirunālaippōvār* to the Dancing *Śiva* at *Tillai*. In that story as related, it is the priests at *Tillai* who instilled fear in the untouchable saint. The priests were compelled by the order of *Śiva* himself to

371 '...தங்களுக்கு ஏற்ற பண்பில் தரும்பணித் தலைநின்று உய்த்தே அங்கணர் கோயில் உள்ளார் அகம்படித் தொண்டு செய்வார்' (பெ.பு. 353).

372 '...மறுஇலா மரபின் வந்து மாறுஇலா ஒழுக்கம் பூண்டார்...' (பெ.பு. 355).

373 'போற்றி நீள்தில்லை வாழ்அந்ணர் திறம் புகலல் உற்றேன் நீற்றினால் நிறைந்தகோல நிருந்தனுக்கு உரியதொண்டு ஆம்...' (பெ.பு. 352).

374 '...சிவன்பால் அன்பாம் பேறு எனப் பெருகி வாழ்வார்...' (பெ.பு. 355).

375 'வருமுறை எரிமுன்று ஒம்பி மன்உயிர் அருளால் மல்கத்...' (பெ.பு. 354).

376 '... தம்மையே தமக்கு ஒப்பான நிலைமையால் தலைமை சார்ந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 357).

377 'இன்று இவர் பெருமை எம்மால் இயம்பல் ஆம் எல்லைத்து ஆமோ தென்தமிழ்ப் பயனாய் உள்ள திருத்தொண்டத் தொகை முன்பாட அன்று வன்தொண்டர் தம்மை அருளிய ஆருர் அண்ணல் முன் திருவாக்கால் கோத்த முதல்பொருள் ஆனார் என்றார்' (பெ.பு. 358).

circumvent the tradition of prohibiting an untouchable from entering the temple (PP. 1073)³⁷⁸. Even though the priests did follow *Śiva's* command, the *Tillai* priests in this story represent an obstacle to, not representatives of devotion. *Cēkkiḷār* believes that the difference among the priests and other devotees can be subdued when the hereditary pursuits are fused in the worship of and service to *Śiva*.

This makes clear, that *Cēkkiḷār*, simultaneously tries to link the *nāyaṇmār* and yet distinguished them from the temple priests as practitioners of religion; the *nāyaṇmār* propagated their ideal of devotion moving from place to place exemplifying practices based on instinctive, aesthetic, and moral, but they strove not to identify themselves as religionists as of the temple priests. This tension between these two groups was ultimately crystallized in the composition of the *Tirut Toṇṭar Tokai* i.e. ‘The Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord’ who performed acts of service in extraordinary manner (PP. 335-349)³⁷⁹. Through this story *Cēkkiḷār* not only suggest the distance between the devotion expressed by *nāyaṇmār* and the ritualism of the *Tillai* priests but also gives a concrete expression in his hagiographical literature, the simultaneously an association and of break of the *nāyaṇmār* with that of *Tillai* priests. This suggests that *Cēkkiḷār* was willing to abandon the idea that the temple ritualism was the most efficacious way to reach *Śiva*. This does not mean that *Cēkkiḷār* rejected and scorns temple praxis and the priests; he rather proposes practices based aesthetic, instinctive and moral.

³⁷⁸ ‘...அப்பரிசே தில்லைவாழ் அந்தணர்க்கும் எரி அமைக்க மெய்ப்பொருள் ஆனார் அருளி அம்பலத்தே மேவினார்’ (பெ.பு. 1073).

³⁷⁹ It is narrated in this section that *Cuntarar* drew near to the temple of the Lord. Within the temple, a great number of devotees were gathered. When the *nāyaṇār* saw them, wishing he shall become their servant, he passed on the Lord. The Lord commanded that *Cuntarar* should begin to sing a song of praise in honour of the priests of *Tillai*. In response, the *nāyaṇār* not only repeatedly bowed down and greeted each devotee with the word’s ‘I am your servant’ but also composed ‘The Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord’ who exemplified devotion to *Śiva* in every manner of service.

Cēkkiḷār's interest in *Śiva* devotion was to chronicle the development of the poems and the stories of the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* across different and their religious services practices based on instinctive, aesthetic and moral. This he does it at Temple of *Tillai* which shows *Cēkkiḷār* seen to have had a continuing concern for the temple at *Tillai* as a locus of the Dancing *Śiva* while pointing a model of social cohesion based on devotion to *Śiva* across caste affiliations, but did not cast aspersions on *nāyaṇmār* on any account. The galaxy of devotees includes tradesman, kings, chieftains, washer man and other who received equal treatment³⁸⁰.

The instinctive mode of worship of *Śiva* as exemplified by the *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam*, makes one understand the manifestation of divine fervour should be executed spontaneously as the uncontrolled demonstration of the spiritual intuitions and not under any compulsion or rules set by tradition. According to *Cēkkiḷār*, *Umādevi*, *Śiva's* consort has preached to the world the method of instinctive worship by way of forming a *Śiva-linga* out of sand in a river and did worship it. When *Śiva* intended to test Her steadfastness, He made the river in floods and she embraced the Lord (PP. 1132-1156). *Caṇṭēcūrar* constructed a *Śiva-linga* out of sand and poured the cow's milk as sacred bath and expressed his instinctive way of worship. When his father, without knowing the inner propensity of his son, suspected the propriety of his worship and

³⁸⁰ *Cēkkiḷār* portrays *Amarnīti* as one who hailed from the merchant clan and he generously distributed clothes for the worshippers of the Lord. Yet on another occasion, it is narrated that *Tirukurippuṭ Tonṭar* (PP 1083-1210) washed the clothes of the devotees of the temple. This too, was a mode of participation in the temple centred worship. He washed all the dirt and stains and by doing so *Cēkkiḷār* relates that he washed away all the impurities of the ego. This indicates that *Cēkkiḷār* transcends ritual action to emphasize the significance of service and moral living.

attempted to damage the *Śiva-linga*, the *nāyaṇār* who was in deep ecstasy threw a straw which became a dagger and chapped off the legs of his father (PP. 1211-1270).

Further, instinctive worship culminates in offering a few objects which have not been prescribed as having religious value. *Cākkiya nāyaṇār* threw a piece of stone on the *Śiva-linga* and the Lord accepted it as the object of adoration as if it is a flower and blessed him (PP. 3641-3658). When *Mūrthy nāyaṇār* was chosen to be the king by the royal elephant, he had determined to rule his dynasty with the following things: sacred ashes as anointment, the kingly ornaments representing *Śiva* emblems, and matted locks as the crown (PP. 1013)³⁸¹. The same saint, before he was chosen as the ruler, was offering sandal paste to *Śiva* worship regularly. But due to non-availability of sandal wood, there was likely to be black mark in his offering. But instinctively he realized that he could offer his hand itself as sandal and dashed his hand against the stone and was instantly blessed by *Śiva* (PP. 973-1021). The feature of this instinctive worship is that their routine service to the temple and even to the devotees, the un-hesitantly found out the solution by way of sacrificing either a part of the body or the whole of their life (PP. 4060-4068)³⁸². This uncommon trend of worship as presented in the *Periya Purāṇam* may be attributed to many *nāyaṇmār* who seldom cared to own anything as theirs.

³⁸¹ 'வையம் முறை செய் குவன் ஆகில் வயங்கு நீறே செய்யும் அபிடேகமும் ஆக செழுங்கலன்கள் ஐயன் அடையாளமும் ஆக அணிந்து தாங்கும் மொய்புன் சடைமா முடியே யாவது என்றார்' (பெ.பு. 1013).

³⁸² *Kanapullar nāyaṇār* felt that the best course to deposit wealth was to burn lamps in the temple continuously. He regularly cut grass and after selling it, purchased oil and continued his service. But God's will was otherwise, probably, to show the greatness of His devotees, that owing to draught situation nowhere did grass grow. The devotee did not lose heart. As he did not get grass to sell and get oil, he held up his hair in the flame and set it ablaze.

Aesthetic worship of the *nāyaṇmār* as presented by *Cēkḱilār* comprises of the splendid worship performed by the *nāyaṇmār* to satisfy their tendency of appreciation i.e. the resplendent beauty of *Śiva* is enjoyed in every one of His creations and hence the *nāyaṇmār* feels abundant joy in offering the objects of worship. In their devotional outpourings the *nāyaṇmār* express the beauty of *Śiva* as they have experienced and one can discern the aesthetic fervour implied in them. *Tirunāvukkaracar* exclaims to behold *Śiva* at *Tillai* who dances with bent eyebrows, smile in the rosy lips, tresses of hair, and smearing white ashes in the pearl-like body (PP.1438)³⁸³. If one is gifted to gaze at the lifted leg with admiration, even human birth is blessed (PP.1441)³⁸⁴. Among the major characteristic of the *nāyaṇmār*, joy is said to be the expression of aesthetic sense. The Lord reveals his beauty, while the devout souls receive such cosmic visions and rejoices at the ecstatic state and, in turn, offer worship to the Lord by praising His physical form, condescension, mythical role etc (PP. 2059)³⁸⁵.

The moral sphere of worship signifies the purgation of the mind and spirit. As worship requires a proper blending of both metaphysics and psychology i.e. essential unity between moral ideal and virtuous living, it is to be done more on a practical way than on a purely theoretical basis. The external way of discharging one's obligatory

³⁸³ 'சினவிடை ஏறு உகைத்து ஏறும் மணவாள நம்பி கழல் சென்று தாழ்ந்து வுனபவள வாய் திறந்து வானவர்க்கும்...' (பெ.பு. 1443).

³⁸⁴ '...நெஞ்சு உருகப் பொழிபுனல்வார் கண்இணையும் பரவிய சொல் நிறைந்தவாயும் தம் செயலில் ஒழியாத திருப்பணியும் மாறாது சாரும் நாளில்...' (பெ.பு. 1441).

³⁸⁵ 'உணர்வின்நேர் பெறுவரும் சிவபோகத்தை ஒழிவுஇன்றி உருவின்கண் அணையும் ஜம்பொறி அளவினும் எளிவர அருளினை எனப் போற்றி இணைஇல் வண்பெருங் கருணையே ஏத்திமுன் எடுத்த சொல் பதிகத்தில் புணரும் இன்இசை பாடினார் ஆடினார் பொழிந்தனர் விழிமாரி' (பெ.பு. 2064).

"You have bestowed upon me the inward experience of bliss, endless and divine," he cried, "it has come in visible form, easy to apprehend with the senses." He praised the Lord's ineffable grace in a hymn set to a sweet melody, he sang, he danced, he wept" (PP. 2064).

duties in the religious sphere constitutes objective morality, while the psychological basis of virtues constitutes reflective morality. While portraying the characteristic features of every *nāyaṇmār*'s religious life, *Cēkkiḷār* finds pleasure in delineating their virtuous mould. The *nāyaṇmār* have desisted from the fundamental blemishes like, wealth, desires and sensuous pleasures which are definitely detrimental to religious assignments and progress. But they preferred a life of devotion characterised by service and sacrifice. The *nāyaṇmār* were fond of offering sacrifices which means submission of sacred things to the worship of *Śiva*. The attitude implies the surrendering of sensuality and selfishness. The steadfastness in performing sacrifices despite the ordeals the *nāyaṇmār* endured has been explained picturesquely by *Cēkkiḷār*³⁸⁶.

4.5 Summary

The scrutiny of the history of the period suggests that at the time the *Periya Purāṇam* was created great upheavals had taken place in Tamil culture and identity. *Cēkkiḷār*'s treatise reflects on various new ideologies that emerged to re-examine the social order. Two major ideologies emerged to provide alternatives to the reform of Tamil society; one emerged from within, as an orthodox tradition and the other as a heterodox tradition. One such significant phenomenon to emerge within the Tamil tradition, as an orthodox tradition, was the devotional movement.

³⁸⁶ *Kanampulla nayannar* felt that the best course to deposit wealth was to burn the lamps in the temple continuously. He regularly cut grass and after selling it, purchased oil and continued his service. But God's will was otherwise, probably, to show the greatness of his devotees, that owing to draught situation nowhere did grass grow,. The devotee did not lose heart. As he did get grass to sell and get oil, he held up his hair to the flame and set it ablaze. *Cēkkiḷār* cleverly incorporates the truth of *Śaivism* with the actual life of the *nayannar* that the aspirants have clung fast to the sacred feet of the Lord as the real substance and resort to divine service.

Apart from the orthodox traditions, emerged heterodox traditions such as Buddhism and Jainism. These two religions did not follow the way of the Vedas or its ritualism. For *Cēkḱilār*, these two religions did not present idea of a personal God whom the ordinary people could seek in times of trouble. It was rather, a dogmatically individualistic, introspective system that had no basis in reality. On the other hand, Jainism offered a path foreign to Tamil ethos. It was a path that was devoid of personal piety.

For *Cēkḱilār* it is *nāyaṇmār* who preached a personal God and loving devotion to Him. What is more significant is that through the frequent travels that the leaders undertook from temple to temple singing the praises of *Śiva* the enkindled the love of *Śiva*. By these they created a sacred geography of their own comprising of the numerous temples of towns and villages and rivers. They sang devotional poems in Tamil, in their mother tongue. It is for this reason, Tamil *Śaivism* flourished mainly because of the active role the *nāyaṇmār* played in forging ideological links between various aspects of Tamil culture earlier dominated by the those of indigenous war heroes – the celebration of the Tamil land and language, the ethos of the indigenous Tamil civilization and literature, and the values of the region's dominant non-priestly caste-groups, in terms of emotional devotion to *Śiva*. The resultant cultural identity was presented as distinctly 'Tamil' as opposed to the ideologies of rival sects such as the Jains and Buddhism.

In his medieval hagiography *Cēkḱilār* extends and synthesizes the same broad themes, this time in the context of religious competition to win royal patronage, and in

terms of the lives of the *nāyaṇmār*. Devotion of these *nāyaṇmār* – ‘servitors of the Lord’, contempt and intolerant towards the Jainis, and Buddhism are traits of all the *nāyaṇmār*, *Cēkkiḷār* composition of *Periya Purāṇam*, offering obeisance to each of the *nāyaṇmār*, by naming every one as an example of devotion and service. Its appeal was to the heart. Such was the context of *Cēkkiḷār*’s composition. The songs are composed in a spirit of protest against conventional rituals and the intercession of priests between man and god. Each *nāyaṇmār* worship a personal God i.e. *Śiva* and their poems explore the relationship of the self with *Śiva*. In emphasizing the creation of his work of such great men and women due to royal and divine mandates, of the authoritative vernacular hagiographical text, its presentation as a countertext to a Jain and Buddhist world, and its canonization as a text equal to the Sanskrit Vedas in sancity, the twelfth century narrative of the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam* reveals that the not only the author *Cēkkiḷār* but also the Tamil *Śaiva* tradition, was keenly aware of the political, social and cultural implication of the hagiographical project.

PART II

THE THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE *PERIYA PURĀṆAM*

CHAPTER FIVE

CĒKKIĻĀR'S VISION OF ŚIVA

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines *Cēkkiḷār's* theological vision. Specifically, his vision of *Śiva*. It is this vision that proved pivotal in his emphasis of devotion that manifested in service and moral living of the *nāyaṇmār*. Since *Cēkkiḷār* was not a systematic philosopher or a theologian, his treatise does not present his thoughts in a systematic logical sequence. As a hagiographer and a poet, he couches his fundamental theological concepts in plain symbolic and poetic imagery. This chapter will attempt to present *Cēkkiḷār's* thought in an analytic, logical and interpretative way. The contention is that *Cēkkiḷār* had a deep concern to transform the consciousness of the Tamil society based on this theological vision of *Śiva*. He shapes this image of *Śiva* by selectively drawing upon and integrating the myths and doctrines found in the Vedas, *Āgamās* and *Purāṇās*. The whole fabric of his emphasis on devotion manifested in service and moral living rests on this image of *Śiva*. The chapter is divided into the following components.

5.2 *Cēkkiḷār's* Perception of *Śiva*

5.2.1 Release (*Vītu*: வீடு)

5.2.2 Grace (*Aruḷ*: அருள்)

5.2.3 Madness (*Pittan*: பித்தன்)

5.3 Philosophical Notions and Local Myths

5.4 Summary

5.2 *Cēkḱilār's Perception of Śiva*

In simplistic term *Cēkḱilār's* image of *Śiva* is the *Śiva* acknowledged publically in Vedas, *Āgamās*, *Purāṇās* and Epics, and the icons of the temples, shrines and most specifically the *Śiva* of the Tamil *nāyaṇmār*. *Cēkḱilār* selectively draws upon the features and stories of *Śiva* found in these scriptures and indigenous tradition and integrates them so as to form his own image or perception of *Śiva*. In the *Periya Purāṇam* one finds the complete integration of these myths, philosophical concepts and the personal experience of the *nāyaṇmār*. They all correlate and eventually unite to form one coherent image of *Śiva*.

To understand this image of *Śiva*, there are three closely related aspects of *nāyaṇmār's* personal experience of *Śiva* or three facets of *Śiva's* reaction to the *nāyaṇmār* one need to know which *Cēkḱilār* relates. These facets imply and develop from each other. They could be categorised as release (*vītu*: வீடு), grace (*aruḷ*: அருள்)³⁸⁷ and madness (*pittan*: பித்தன்). They are key to *nāyaṇmār's* experience of *Śiva* which is important to *Cēkḱilār's* image of *Śiva*. Let us examine in turn each of these characteristics of the *Śiva* experienced by the *nāyaṇmār* along with their public counterparts i.e. the image of *Śiva* found in scriptures and indigenous tradition.

5.2.1 Release (*vītu* : வீடு)

For the *nāyaṇmār* as *Cēkḱilār* points out, *Śiva* is the greatest conferrer of release (*vītu*: வீடு), particularly understood as release from repeated births (*perumpiṇavi*: பெரும்பிறவி)³⁸⁸ and bondage (*pantam*: பந்தம்)³⁸⁹. *Cēkḱilār* does not tire of pointing to the

³⁸⁷ For the justification of using the word grace for the Tamil word *aruḷ* (அருள்), see p. 92.

³⁸⁸ '...தொல்லை வினை ஆக உடைய மலம் முன்றும் அணைய வரும் பெரும் பிறவி மாசு தனை

fact that it is *Śiva* who prevented the *nāyaṇmār* from walking in the ‘path of wickedness’ (அவநெறி: *avaneri*) (PP. 225)³⁹⁰, expunge their ‘taint of deeds’ (தம்மைவினை மாசு : *tam'maiviṇai mācu*) (PP.1081)³⁹¹ or ‘evil deeds’ (தீவினை: *tīviṇai*)’ (PP. 225)³⁹²; once the darkness of deluded deeds (வஞ்ச வல்வினைக் கறுப்பு: *vañca valviṇaik karuppu*) has been severed, the feet of the Lord is ever present in the heart of the devotees (PP. 509)³⁹³. The use of same gracious verbs (e.g., கருணை கூர்ந்த: *maruṇai kūrnta* i.e. in mercy)³⁹⁴ as well as martial verbs (e.g., தடுத்து: *taṭuttu* i.e. prevent, அறுத்து: *aruttu* i.e. severe)³⁹⁵ also describes *Śiva*’s action against entailment of sins (‘பவத்தின் முன்னைச் சார்பு’: *pāvattiṇ munṇaic cārpu*) (PP. 753)³⁹⁶ and bondage. Bondage or *pantam* (பந்தம்) later becomes a important term in the Tamil *Śaiva Siddhanta* philosophical tradition, although *Cēkkiḷār* uses it much less frequently than the ever-recurrent ‘repeated births’ (பெரும்பிறவி: *perum pīravi*) and ‘evil deeds’ (தீவினை: *tīviṇai*) (PP. 225, 1196)³⁹⁷.

விடக் கழித்து வரும்...’ (பெ.பு. 1196).

³⁸⁹ ‘பந்தம் வீடுத ரும்பர மன்கழல்...’ (பெ.பு. 300).

Saiva Siddhanta believes in the three eternal entities of God, Soul and Bondage (materials of bondage). These are called *Pati*, *Pasu* and *Pasam* respectively in Siddhanta philosophy. *Pati* means Lord or master (of the souls) who is God. The *Jiva* or human soul is called *Pasu* or animal because it is tied up by *Pasam* or rope of bondage. *Pasam* means bondage. *Pasu* means that which is under bondage. All things known and perceived are included in these three categories. According to *Saiva Siddhanta* God is one, Souls are many and *Pasam* consists of three impurities (*malams*: மலம்) called *Anava* (*anavam*: ஆனவம்) which is due to primordial ignorance, *Karma* (*kanmam*: கன்மம்) which accrues from the good and bad deeds of the human soul and *Maya* (*mayai*: மாயை) which is considered as impurity arising from the attachment to the world. Like *Pati* who is real and eternal, *Pasu* and *Pasam* are also real and eternal. Existence of God and other eternal entities is established by various epistemological means. Though *Cēkkiḷār* does not deal in detail of any of these impurities, nonetheless he mentions them as *pattam* (பந்தம்) i.e. bondage and emphasises that it the feet of the Lord is the source of bondage and release, therefore the Tamil saints engaged in serving the feet of the Lord.

³⁹⁰ ‘...அனைத்து தீவினையால் அவநெறியில் செல்லாமே தடுத்து ஆண்டாய்’ (பெ.பு. 225).

³⁹¹ ‘...தம்மைவினை மாசு அறுத்துச் சுந்தரத்...’ (பெ.பு. 1081).

³⁹² ‘...அனைத்து தீவினையால் அவநெறியில் செல்லாமே தடுத்து ஆண்டாய்’ (பெ.பு. 225).

³⁹³ ‘...வஞ்ச வல்வினைக் கறுப்பு அறும்மனத்து அடியார்கள் நெஞ்சில் நீங்கிடா அடிமலர் நீள்நிலம் பொலிய’ (பெ.பு. 509).

³⁹⁴ ‘...அங்கணர் கருணை கூர்ந்த...’ (PP. 753)

³⁹⁵ ‘தடுத்து ஆண்டாய்’ (பெ.பு. 225). ‘...தம்மைவினை மாசு அறுத்துச் சுந்தரத்...’ (P.1081).

³⁹⁶ ‘...அங்கணர் கருணை கூர்ந்த அருள் திருநோக்கம் எய்தத் தங்கிய பாவத்தின் முன்னைச் சார்புவிட்டு’ (பெ.பு. 753).

³⁹⁷ ‘...அனைத்து தீவினையால் அவநெறியில் செல்லாமே தடுத்து ஆண்டாய்’ (பெ.பு. 225).

‘...தொல்லை வினை ஆசு உடைய மலம் முன்றும் அணைய வரும் பெரும் பிறவி மாசு தனை

Thus, *Cēkkiḷār* points to the fact that *Śiva* is the source of bondage and release and as one who initiates a change in *nāyaṇmār*'s life (PP. 300)³⁹⁸. The *nāyaṇmār*'s attitude to the fundamental process of life of birth, death, and bondage is significantly altered. In a sense, a significant change has occurred in which *Śiva* has caught the attention of the *nāyaṇmār* from the 'path of wickedness' that obstruct human living. *Cēkkiḷār* notes that the Lord freed his servants there from the taint of deeds, and favoured them in such a way to adore his feet (PP. 1081)³⁹⁹. Remarkably, this free intervention and interaction of *Śiva* with the *nāyaṇmār* reflects various traditional and local myths that are related about *Śiva* to which *Cēkkiḷār* alludes to, so as to form a coherent image of *Śiva*. In this way *Cēkkiḷār* tries to establish the idea that the *Śiva* of the *nāyaṇmār* is identical with pan-Indian *Śiva* and that *nāyaṇmār* in their devotional poems blended indigenous mythology of *Śiva* that is peculiar to Tamils with pan-Hindu myths of *Śiva*.

One of the principle pan-Indian myths that are frequently referred to in the *Periya Purāṇam* about *Śiva* is the destruction of the three cities: by the force of their austerities, a family of demons had been enabled to build three impregnable cities, and from them they tyrannized both gods and mortals. When the time span of a thousand years allotted to the demons was over, the gods went to *Śiva* and asked him for help. Assenting to their plea, *Śiva* mounted a specially constructed celestial chariot, and with Brahman as his charioteer he set off to attack the three cities. As he approached, the three cities merged into one. Then using mount *Meru* as his bow, *Śiva* shot a single miraculous arrow which

விடக் கழித்து வரும்...' (பெ.பு. 1196).

³⁹⁸ 'பந்தம் வீடுத ரும்பர மன்கழல் சிந்தை ஆரவம்...' (பெ.பு. 300).

³⁹⁹ '...தம்மைவினை மாசு அறுத்துச் சுந்தரத் தாமரைபுரையும் துணை அடிகள் தொழுதிருக்க அந்தம் இலா ஆனந்தப் பெருங்குத்தர் அருள் புரிந்தார்...' (பெ.பு. 1081)

transfixed the cities and destroyed them. This myth is one of many in which *Cēkṣiḷār* recounts *Śiva* as agent of triumph of good. In essence, this is an act of release from bondage. *Cēkṣiḷār* frequently mentions the place i.e. *Vīraṭṭāṇam* as the place where *Śiva* is believed to have performed His cosmic deeds and destroyed the cities and addresses *Śiva* as the Lord of *Vīraṭṭāṇam* (PP. 1400)⁴⁰⁰. The world is saved from the demons just as the *nāyaṇmār*'s bondage is severed by *Śiva*. The resemblance is clearly visible when *Cēkṣiḷār* narrates that the *nāyaṇmār* journeyed to this place i.e. *Vīraṭṭāṇam* in view of seeing *Śiva* (PP. 1307)⁴⁰¹, and in that place, their former deeds and attachments lose their hold (PP. 1415)⁴⁰².

Another pan-Indian myth that is alluded to by *Cēkṣiḷār* is that of *Śiva* as the '*Tiru nīlankaṇṭam* (திரு நீலகண்டன்) or Dark or Blue-Throated one' (PP. 363)⁴⁰³. *Cēkṣiḷār* records that for the good of the world the Lord drank the poison from the sea of milk, it might have seemed as if it was the force of human penances that prevented Him from swallowing it. In fact it was the Lord Himself who checked the poison and held it in his throat (PP.363)⁴⁰⁴. Though, this is a myth, *Cēkṣiḷār* uses it to shape his theological vision,

⁴⁰⁰ '...வீரட்டர் பாதம் மிக நினைவால்...' (பெ.பு.1405). Cosmic deeds of *Śiva* which are eight in numbers is said to have been mostly in a place called *Tanjore*. These were collectively known as the '*Attavīraṭṭāṇam*' i.e. the places of the eight heroic deeds. For a list of the eight heroic deeds of *Śiva* at *Vīraṭṭāṇam* and the sites of the eight *Vīraṭṭāṇam* shrines, see Dorai Rangaswamy, 1990, p. 374.

⁴⁰¹ '...நீள்கரையில் நீடுபெருஞ் சீர்ஆர் திருஅதிகை வீரட்டாணம் சேர்ந்தார்...' (பெ.பு. 1312).

⁴⁰² '...பழவினைப் பாசம் பறிய அல்லல் ஒழிந்தது அங்கு எய்தி ஆண்ட அரசினைப் பணிந்து...' (பெ.பு. 1415).

⁴⁰³ '...சிவன் எந்தை கண்ட தன்னைத் திருநீல கண்டம் என்பார்' (பெ.பு. 363).

⁴⁰⁴ 'அவர் தங்கண் மனைவ யாரும் அருந்ததிக் கற்பின் மிக்கர் புவனங்கள் உய்யஇயர் பொங்கு நஞ்சு உண்ண யாம்செய் தவம் நின்று தடுத்தது என்னத் தகைந்து தான் தரித்தது என்று சிவன் எந்தை கண்ட தன்னைத் திருநீல கண்டம் என்பார்' (பெ.பு. 363).

This narration resonates with the legend where it is noted that the gods and demons who craved for the nectar of immortality, churned the cosmic ocean which lay at the bottom of the cosmos. However, before they could attain the nectar of immortality, a deadly poison emerged and threatened to destroy the entire cosmos. In a state of helplessness, the gods and demons turned to *Śiva* for his intervention. On hearing their cry, *Śiva*, for the good of the entire world swallowed the poison so as to save the world. As a reminder of his eternal goodness, He held the poison in this throat, which made his throat appear blue.

and to present *Śiva* acting in a benign role as protector and preserver of the universe. *Cēkkiḷār* draws attention to this image in a number of places in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 2379)⁴⁰⁵. Parallels are drawn between *nāyaṇmār*'s situation and that of those saved by *Śiva*'s drinking of the poison: 'By favour of dark-throated one, *Nampi* put on the guard that befitted the *Śaivite* path, with sandal paste and garlands of beads and flowers. The effect was so impressive people hailed him as the prince of ascetics. So he spent this time joyfully singing the praise of the Lord who dwells in the ant-ill' (PP. 276)⁴⁰⁶. On another occasion *Cēkkiḷār* narrates 'in order to dispel illusion, *Eripattar* (எறிபத்தர்) used to worship the Holy One in that temple and to perform acts of service for those who belonged to the Dark-throated Lord' (PP. 556)⁴⁰⁷.

Another myth that is of interest that is referred to by *Cēkkiḷār* is one of *Śiva*'s acts i.e. his catching of the falling Ganges in his hair. At a time of drought, by dint of fierce penances the King *Bhagīratha* prevailed upon Brahman to grant him a boon. He requested that the river Ganges should be allowed to descend from heaven to water the earth. Brahman acceded to this request, but advised the king that the weight of the river's water falling unchecked upon the earth would do incalculable damage. So the king had to go to a peak in the Himalayas where *Śiva* was engaged in meditation. There by the performances of further penances, he persuaded *Śiva* to lend his aid. Eventually, *Śiva*

⁴⁰⁵ 'அடியார்ஆம் இமையவர்தம் கூட்டம் உய்ய அலைகடலவாய் நஞ்சுஉண்ட அமுதே...' (பெ.பு. 2379).

'Sweet Lord, to save your heavenly servants, you drank the poison from the wave-tossed sea' (PP. 2379)

⁴⁰⁶ 'மைவளர் கண்டர் அருளினாலே வண்தமிழ் நாவலர் தம் பெருமான் சைவ விடங்கின் அணிபுனைந்து சந்தமும் மாயையும் தாரும் ஆகி மெய்வளர் கோலம் எல்லாம் பொலிய மிக்க விழுத்தவ வேந்தர் என்ன தெய்வமணிப் புற்றுஉளாரைப் புாடித் திளைத்த மகிழ்வொடும் செல்லாநின்றார்' (பெ.பு. 276).

⁴⁰⁷ '...இருள்கடு ஒடுங்கு கண்டத்து இறையவர்க்கு உரிமை பூண்டார்க்கு அருள்பெரும் தொண்டு செய்வா அவர் எறிபத்தர் ஆவார்' (பெ.பு. 556).

allowed the river to fall upon his own head, and thus to flow gently downward through his hair to the earth. Here *Śiva* again is represented as the divine ascetic, and in a beneficent role. *Śiva*'s function as the one who holds the river Ganges is simply cited along with His other physical features in the very first verses of the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 1)⁴⁰⁸. In one verse, however, the rationale for *Śiva*'s action and its significance to *nāyaṇmār*'s life is stated: 'They who do not make him their own, with his hair in matted locks, make their own the way of wickedness' (PP. 1518)⁴⁰⁹. Again, *Śiva* guards the *nāyaṇmār* from the path of wickedness just as he saves the earth from destruction.

5.2.2 Grace (*aruḷ* : அருள்)

Turning from the portrayal of *Śiva* as one who delivered the *nāyaṇmār* from repeated births (பெரும் பிறவி : *perumpiravi*) and bondage (பந்தம்: *pantam*), one begins to notice in the *Periya Purāṇam* subjective transformation that is brought into the life of *nāyaṇmār* by *Śiva*'s interaction with them. *Śiva* grants His *aruḷ* (அருள்) i.e. grace on the *nāyaṇmār*, and while in one sense it indicates the already stated release from repeated births (பெரும் பிறவி: *perumpiravi*) and bondage (பந்தம்: *pantam*), it also implies much more. In addition, the very frequent references to *Śiva*'s bestowal of His *aruḷ* (grace) on the *nāyaṇmār* are often accompanied by descriptions of how *Śiva* enters and enslaves them (PP. 147-349)⁴¹⁰. Therefore, the consequence of *Śiva*'s *aruḷ* (grace), is that it makes

⁴⁰⁸ 'உலகு எல்லாம் உணர்ந்து ஓதற்கு அரியவன் நிலவுஉலாவிய நீர்மலி வேணியன் அலகுஇல் சோதியன் அம்பலத்து ஆடுவான் மலர்சிலம்பு அடி வாழ்த்தி வணங்குவாம்' (பெ.பு. 1).

⁴⁰⁹ '...செய்ய சடையார் தமைச்சேரார் தீங்கு நெறிசேர்கின்றார் என்று...' (பெ.பு. 1523).

⁴¹⁰ In this section title 'The Taking of a Captive', *Cēkḷār* narrates how *Śiva* took possession of *Cuntara*. *Cēkḷār* clearly relates that 'on mount *Kailāsa* amid the chanting of the scriptures, in his grace the Lord had promised to take *Ālāla Cuntaraṇ* as his servant. Now the one and only Lord, whom *Tirumāl* and *Ayaṇ* could not find although the one flew up high the other dug deep in the earth, came to fulfil his promise' (PP. 174).

'ஆலும் மறை சூழ்கயிலையின் கண் அருள்செய்த சாலும் மொழியால் வழிதடுத்து

one to melt in love for *Śiva*, with an urge and with a purpose to ‘continue to sing His praise in varied strains throughout the world’ (PP. 222)⁴¹¹. For *Cēkḱilār*, *Śiva*’s bestowal of *aruḷ* (grace) ‘grants the privilege of being with him forever in love that knows no parting’ (PP. 648)⁴¹². It is for this reason *Cēkḱilār* describes *Śiva*’s *aruḷ* (grace) as ‘miraculous’ (‘அற்புதம்’ : *arputam*) and even alleviates one from affliction (PP. 286).⁴¹³ For *Cēkḱilār*, *aruḷ* (grace) is a synonym of *Śiva* (PP. 1748)⁴¹⁴. He ‘appears in *aruḷ* (grace)’ (எதிர் நின்றும் எழுந்தருள்: *etir ninrum eḷuntaruḷ*) (PP. 260), and His ‘*aruḷ* (grace) is boundless’ (தன் அருள் இருந்தவண்ணம் : *taṇ aruḷ iruntavaṇṇam*) (PP. 850). This *aruḷ* (grace) of *Śiva* is ‘ineffable’ (PP 648)⁴¹⁵ and ‘incomprehensible’ (PP. 1641)⁴¹⁶.

It is interesting to note that *Cēkḱilār* frequently mentions that *Śiva*’s inability to be known by the gods, for that *Cēkḱilār* repetitively combines depiction of *nāyaṇmār*’s own reception of *Śiva*’s *aruḷ* (grace) with references to the gods’ lack of success in comprehending *Śiva*. It is stated ‘in his *aruḷ* (grace) the Lord had promised to take *Ālāla Cuntaraṇ* as his servant. Now the one and only Lord, whom *Tirumāl* and *Ayaṇ* could not find although the one flew up high and the other dug deep in the earth, came to fulfil his

ஆடிமை கொள்வான் மேல்உற எழுந்து மிகு கீழ்உற அகழ்ந்து மாலும்
அயனுக்கும் அரியார் ஒருவர் வந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 174).

411 ‘சொல்ஆர் தமிழ்சைபாடிய தொண்டன்தனை இன்னும் பல்ஆறு உலகினில் நம்புகழ்பாடு
என்றுஉறுபரிவில் நல்லூர் வெண்ணெய் நல்லூர் அருள்துறை மேவிய நம்பன் எல்லா
உலகு உய்யப்புரம் எய்தான் அருள்செய்தான்’ (பெ.பு. 222).

412 ‘...பிரான் அருளைப் பற்றவர் தம் கைவாளால் பாசம் அறுத்தருளிப் உற்றவரை
என்றும் உடன்பிரியா அன்பு அருளிப் பொன் தொடியாள் பாகனார் பொன்னம்பலம்
அணைந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 648).

413 ‘...அற்புதமோ சிவன் அருளோ அறியேன் என்று...’ (பெ.பு. 286).
‘He stood amazed. “What can this be?” He wondered ... or perhaps it is a miracle of *Śiva*’s grace’ (PP. 286).

414 ‘அருள் உடையார் அளித்தருளும் செவ்விய பேர் அருள் விளம்பும்...’ (பெ.பு.1748).
‘... “He is of all grace,” she thought, “It is not my place to explain the working of grace”...’ (PP. 1748)

415 ‘மற்று இனிநாம் போற்றுவது என்வானோர் பிரான் அருளைப்...’ (பெ.பு. 648).

416 ‘ஆதி தேவர் தம் திருவருள் பெருமை யார் அறிந்தார்...’ (பெ.பு. 1641).

promise' (PP. 174)⁴¹⁷. To affirm such favour of *Śiva* granted to the *nāyaṇmār*, *Cēkkiḷār* also cites the myth and recounts the failure of *Tirumāl* and *Ayaṇ* to comprehend *Śiva*'s manifestation as the fiery *liṅgam* or pillar of light (PP. 18)⁴¹⁸. Repeatedly, *Cēkkiḷār* contrasts the *nāyaṇmār*'s own undeserved fortuity with *Śiva* keeping himself hidden from *Tirumāl* and *Ayaṇ* (PP. 183)⁴¹⁹. In this context it is clear *Cēkkiḷār* by repeatedly mentioning the myth tries to bring out several aspects of *Śiva* and his relation to the *nāyaṇmār*: first, it affirms *Śiva*'s supremacy; second, it attests His absolute freedom and unpredictability in revealing himself to his devotee; and third, it makes clear the paradox of *Śiva*'s *aruḷ* (grace), i.e. a gift not revealed to the likes of *Tirumāl* and *Ayaṇ* is granted to lowly *nāyaṇmār*.

It must be noted that to explain poignantly the nature of *Śiva*'s *aruḷ* (grace), *Cēkkiḷār* also points to the feminine side of the *Śiva*. It is stated that *Śiva* is the one 'who is the origin and the end of all things' (முன்னாகி எப்பொருட்கும் முடிவு ஆகி நின்றானை: *muṇṇāki epporuṭkum muṭivu āki ninṇānai*), 'who includes *Umā* within himself' (தன்

⁴¹⁷ 'ஆலும் மறை சூழ்கயிலையின் கண் அருள்செய்த சாலும் மொழியால் வழிதடுத்து ஆடிமை கொள்வான் மேல்உற எழுந்து மிகு கீழ்உற அகழ்ந்து மாலும் அயனுக்கும் ஒருவர் வந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 174).

⁴¹⁸ 'காதில் வெண்குழையோன் கழல்தொழ நெடியோன் காலம் பார்த்து இருந்ததும் அறியான் சோதிவெண் கயிலைத் தாழ்வாரை முழையில் துதிக்கையோன் ஊர்தியைக் கண்டு மீதுஎழு பண்டைச் செஞ்சுடர் இன்று வெண்சுடர் ஆனதுஎன்று அதன்கீழ் ஆதி ஏனமதாய் இடக்கல் உற்றான் என்று அதனை வந்து அனைதரும் கலுழன்' (பெ.பு. 18).

In this myth *Cēkkiḷār* narrates that *Tirumāl* and *Ayaṇ*, the two gods proceed to argue about which is the supreme God and creator of the world. At that moment *Śiva* manifests himself as a towering lingam of fire, which stretches from the ocean up into the heavens. The two gods seek to measure its extent, *Ayaṇ* by flying upwards as a swan, and *Tirumāl* by digging downwards as a boar. Their attempt ends in failure, and the cosmic lingam bursts open to reveal none other than the Lord *Śiva*. As the two rivals bow before him, *Śiva* proclaims himself to be the Lord of all. The myth is often cited by *Cēkkiḷār* *Śiva*'s matchless nature, and in particular his pre-eminence over *Tirumāl* and *Ayaṇ*.

⁴¹⁹ Here the Lord addresses the Brahmins "this man of *Nāvalūr* is my slave. That is what I have come to tell you." Of course, all the gods, including *Tirumāl* and *Ayaṇ*, and all the people of the world however wealthy are in fact no more than his slaves' (PP. 183).

'ஆவது இது கேண்மின் மறையோர் என் அடியான்இந் நாவல்நகர் ஊரன் இதுநான் மொழிவது என்றான் தேவரையும் மால்அயன் முதல் திருவின் மிக்கோர் யாவரையும் வேறுஅடிமையா உடைய எம்மான்' (பெ.பு. 183).

ஆகத்து உடைபாகம் கொண்டாணை: *taṇ ākattu uṭaipākam koṇṭāṇai* (PP. 1421)⁴²⁰; She is ‘the mother rich in mercy to all living beings’ (எல்லை இல் கருணைத் தாய்அனான் : *ellai il karuṇait tāyaṇāṇ*) (PP. 1083)⁴²¹, the ‘embodiment of *aruḷ* (grace)’ (இன்பத்தின் அருள்கரு: *inṭattiṇ aruḷkaru*) (PP.1138)⁴²². This image of *Śiva* bestowing favours on the *nāyaṇmār* with His consort *Umā* is a prominent image in *Cēkkiḷār*’s hagiography.

The *nāyaṇmār*’s fascination to the union of *Śiva* and His spouse *Umā* interconnect with their personal situation in different ways, two of which are important here. First, *Umā* is beautifully portrayed as accomplice in *Śiva*’s bestowal of *aruḷ* (grace): both graciously came to save the world. *Cēkkiḷār*’s relates ‘looking at the weeping child with compassion, the Lord then instructed his consort whom the entire world adores to give him milk to drink’ (PP. 1969)⁴²³. On another occasion it is re-stated it is the devotees of *Śiva* who is saved by the combined action of *Śiva* with his consort *Umā* (PP. 1995)⁴²⁴. Therefore, *Śiva* is spoken of as *ammai* (mother) and *appan* (father): forming in himself all the qualities of mother and father (PP. 1404).⁴²⁵ Though this term may appear symbolic, it carries a mystic significance so far as to affirm that whoever reaches *Śiva*’s feet would listen to his grace as a child listens to its parent (PP. 2737)⁴²⁶. Secondly, more

⁴²⁰ ‘பொன்னார்ந்த திருவடிக்கென் விண்ணப்பம் என்று எடுத்து முன்னாகி எப்பொருட்கும் முடிவு ஆகி நின்றாணைத் தன் ஆகத்து உமைபாகம் கொண்டாணைச் சங்கரனை நல் நாமத் திருவிருத்தம் நலம் சிறக்கப் பாடுதலும்’ (பெ.பு. 1421).

⁴²¹ ‘ஏயுமாறுபல் உயிர்களுக்கு எல்லைஇல் கருணைத் தாய்அனான் தனி ஆயின் தலைவரைத் தழுவு’ (பெ.பு. 1083).

⁴²² ‘அங்கு மண்ணுல கத்துஉயிர் தழைப்ப அளவுஇல் இன்பத்தின் அருள்கரு இருத்தித்...’ (பெ.பு. 1138).

⁴²³ ‘அழுகின்ற பிள்ளையார் தமைநோக்கி அருள் கருணை எழுகின்ற திருவுள்ளத்து இறையவர்தாம் எவ்உலகும் தொழுகின்ற பால்அடிசில் பொன்வள்ளத்து ஊட்டுஎன்ன’ (பெ.பு. 1969).

⁴²⁴ ‘...வெளியேவந்து இறையவன் உமையாளுடன் அருள்தரஎய் தினை என்பார்’ (பெ.பு. 1995).

⁴²⁵ ‘ஈன்றாளுமாய் எனக் கெந்தையும் ஆகி...’ (பெ.பு. 1404).

‘He is the mother who bore me, and my father too ...’ (PP. 1404)

⁴²⁶ ‘மன்னும் ஏதுக்களால் எனும் வாய்மைதான் தன்னது ஒப்புவேறு இன்மையில் சங்கரன் இன்ன தன்மையை ஏது எடுத்துக்காட்டு அன்னவற்றால் அளப்பிலன் என்றதாம்’ (பெ.பு. 2737).

remarkable perhaps, *Umā* relationship to *Śiva* becomes a kind of paradigm for the *nāyaṇmār*'s own attitude vis-a-vis *Śiva*. Hence, *Cēkḱilār* underlines that the *nāyaṇmār* approached *Śiva* as a child, friend, and father; and *Śiva*'s indwelling with *Umā* becomes exemplary for the type of union which the *nāyaṇmār* yearned with *Śiva* and with other devotees of *Śiva*.

5.2.3 Madness (*pittan*: பித்தன்)

If *Śiva* releases the *nāyaṇmār* from their path of wickedness granting them *aruḷ* (grace) and taking them captive (தடுத்தாட் கொள்ளல்: *taṭuttāṭ koḷḷal*) or taking control of their very self (PP 147-349)⁴²⁷, the subjective result is that *Śiva* makes the *nāyaṇmār* fanatical or mad (PP. 3588)⁴²⁸. This *aruḷ* (grace) captures and enslaves the *nāyaṇmār*: 'it is he who has come and taken me by force to be your own' (PP. 214)⁴²⁹, "He has made me well and truly His slave" (PP. 295)⁴³⁰. Indeed, the melting of the *nāyaṇmār*'s mind and heart, occasioned by *Śiva*'s conferral of *aruḷ* (grace), possibly be viewed as one aspect of the madness which *Śiva* inducts in the *nāyaṇmār*. Perhaps it is for this reason, when *Śiva* gave his vision to *Tirunāvukkaracar*, *Cēkḱilār* describes the *nāyaṇār*'s behaviours as follows: 'with melting heart and streaming tears, *Appar* poured out a stream of poetic song (PP. 1456)⁴³¹. That *Śiva* is the reason of such a transformation in

'... since his grace is such ... devotees should seek the feet of the Lord and listen to his voice ...' (PP. 2737)

⁴²⁷ *Cēkḱilār* dedicates an entire section i.e. verses 147-349 so as to explain how *Śiva* took captive of *Cuntarar* as His servant.

⁴²⁸ 'பித்தஉற்ற மயல் அன்று பிறிது ஒருசார்பு உளது அன்று சித்த விகற்பம் களைந்து தெளிந்த சிவயோகத்தில்...' (பெ.பு. 3588).

He is not mad or mentally deranged, nor suffering from any other malady," they said, "He has attained freedom from all mental instability, and his attention has become clearly focused on *Śiva*..." (PP. 3588).

⁴²⁹ '...மன்றுளீர் செயலோ வந்து வலிய ஆட்கொண்டது என்றார்' (பெ.பு. 214).

⁴³⁰ '...நன்று எனைஆட்கொண்டவர்பால்...' (பெ.பு. 295).

⁴³¹ '...கண்பயிலும் புனல்பொழிய அரசும் வாய்மைக் கலைபயிலும் மொழிபொழிய கசிந்துபாடி' (பெ.பு. 1456).

nāyaṇār's life is certain as *Cēkkiḷār* narrates: "All this time," he said, "I have been deliberately doing wrong. Is this now to be my reward?" 'Thus he came to understand the true nature of *aruḷ* (grace)' (PP. 1345)⁴³². Hence, as presented by *Cēkkiḷār* is the cause of such a change in the *nāyaṇmār*'s life.

In fact, the nature of change or transformation itself is characterised in the *Periya Purāṇam* by sense of 'violence' i.e. to be madly in service to the Lord (PP. 929)⁴³³ and gentleness i.e. to engage in gentle service to *Śiva* (PP. 869)⁴³⁴. Thus, it is remarkable, that one result of *Śiva*'s *aruḷ* (grace) is the *nāyaṇār* became *vaṇṭoṇṭar* (வன்தொண்டர்) or 'violent' servant of the Lord and the others *meṇṭoṇṭar* (மென்தொண்டர்) or 'friendly' servants of the Lord. The former were prepared to sacrifice everything and everybody in the absolute devotion to *Śiva*, to an extent that others could not be expected to emulate, whereas the latter offered an ideal and an example of service to God in devotees which anyone could follow within the circumstance of their own everyday lives.

In brief, to be captivated by *Śiva* is to become like Him; and to become like *Śiva* is to become mad i.e. to be madly in love with Him or fanatical about their service to

⁴³² 'இத்தன்மை நிகழ்ந்துழி நாவின் மொழிக்கு இறை ஆகிய அன்பரும் இந்நெடுநாள் சித்தம் திகழ் தீவினையேன் அடையும் திருவோ இது என்று தெருண்டு அறியா அத்தன் மையன் ஆய இராவணனுக்கு அருளும் கருணைத்திறம் ஆன அதன் மெய்த்தன்மை அறிந்து துதிப்புதுவே மேல்கொண்டு வணங்கினர் மெய்உறவே' (பெ.பு. 1345).

⁴³³ Here *Cēkkiḷār* narrates that 'when this loving devotee was deprived of privilege of feeding the Lord, he tried to cut his throat with his sickle, until he heard the crunching of the mango pickle and the voice telling him not to give up...' (PP. 929).

'பரிவுஉறு சிந்தை அன்பர் பரம்பொரு ளாகி உள்ள பெரியவர் அமுது செய்யப் பெற்றிலென் என்று மாவின் வரிவேடு விடேல் னொழுந் வன்கழுத்து அரிவாள் பூட்டி ...' (பெ.பு. 929).

⁴³⁴ 'கருப்பு வில்லோனைக் காய்ந்தவர் கடவுர் மன்னி விருப்புஉறும் அன்பு மேல்மேல் மிக்கு எழும் வேட்கைகூர ஒருப்படும் உள்ளத் தன்மை உண்மையால் தமக்கு நேர்ந்த திருப்பணி பலவும் செய்து சிவபத நிழலில் சேர்ந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 869).

'Kalayar's heart was truly devoted to the Lord. From then on he remained at Kaṭavūr, performing many acts of service with ever-increasing love and longing, until at last he attained the shade of *Śiva*'s feet' (PP. 869).

Him. Although there is no attempt on *Cēkḱilār*'s part to portray the *nāyaṇmār*'s desire to imitate the details of *Śiva*'s behaviour as related in the myths about Him, it is easy to point out a continuum between the madness of *Śiva* Himself and the bliss that He instils in the *nāyaṇmār*. *Cēkḱilār* portrays *Śiva* as one who acts with a sense of 'madness'; '*Śiva* is the 'madman, crowned with crescent moon' (பித்த பிறைசூடி: *pitta piraicūṭi*) (PP. 220)⁴³⁵. That *Śiva* is spoken as 'mad' is affirmed by the application to him of the same epithet which elsewhere refers to the *nāyaṇmār*, namely, madman (பித்தன் : *pittan*) (PP. 3588)⁴³⁶. Without describing the several narration in the *Periya Purāṇam* upon which *Śiva*'s reputation as a madman (பித்தன்: *pittan*) is founded, here is a instance from the *Periya Purāṇam* which acknowledges the *nāyaṇār*'s mocking of *Śiva* as a madman (பித்தன்: *pittan*)

‘The Lord with the beautiful eye looked in grace upon his devotee, and answered, “You called me ‘madman’. So let that be my name. Call me ‘madman’ in your song.” (PP. 219)⁴³⁷.

Cēkḱilār also points to other of *Śiva*'s characters or bizarre behaviours which might be thought contributory to His image of madness. *Śiva*'s conduct at *Dakṣa*'s sacrifice is clearly referred to in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 2057)⁴³⁸. A somewhat similar

⁴³⁵ ‘...நாவலர் பெருமான் பித்தா பிறைசூடி எனப் பெரிதுஆம் திருப்பதிகம்...’ (பெ.பு. 220).

⁴³⁶ ‘பித்தஉற்ற மயல் அன்று பிறிது ஒருசார்பு உளது அன்று சித்த விகற்பம் களைந்து தெளிந்த சிவயோகத்தில்...’ (பெ.பு. 3588).

He is not mad or mentally deranged, nor suffering from any other malady,” they said, “He has attained freedom from all mental instability, and his attention has become clearly focused on *Śiva*...” (PP. 3588).

⁴³⁷ ‘அன்பனை அருளின் நோக்கி அங்கணர் அருளிச் செய்வார் முன்பு எனைப் பித்தன் என்றே மொழிந்தனை ஆதலாலே என்பெயர் பித்தன் என்றே...’ (பெ.பு. 219).

⁴³⁸ ‘...பொன் குன்ற மங்கை செங்கையால்...’ (பெ.பு. 2057). Here ‘பொன் குன்ற மங்கை’ i.e. ‘maid of the mountains’ refers to ‘*Pārvati*’. According to the myth after her self-immolation at her father’s sacrifice *Dakṣa*’s daughter was reborn as the daughter of the Himalaya Mountains. The myth goes that *Dakṣa*, a creator figure and father of *Śiva*’s first wife, *Satī*, was to perform a sacrifice according to Vedic rites, to which all the gods were invited. *Śiva*’s was not among the invitees, however, and when *Dakṣa* insulted *Śiva* in *Satī*’s presence, she cast herself into the fire and perished. She thus became the first victim of the later practice whereby a widow was expected to burn herself on her dead husband’s pyre. Enraged at this, *Śiva*

episode, although only rarely referred, is *Śiva*'s burning of *Kāma* (PP. 2192)⁴³⁹. Some of the appellations *Cēkṇilār* attributes to *Śiva* are just as instructive as the incidents drawn from mythology. They can be viewed as features of both the unpredictable public *Śiva* of the myths as found in the tradition and the unpredictable *Śiva* of the *nāyaṇmār*'s personal experience. Such description of *Śiva* include 'deceiver' (மாய வண்ணன்: *māya vaṇṇan*) (PP. 407), 'both medicine and mantra' (மருந்தொடு மந்திரம்: *maruntoṭu mantiram*) (PP. 2198), and is 'the [one who took the] form of an old man' to take possession of His devotee (PP. 407)⁴⁴⁰ and the one who appeared as a 'student' to bestow His *aruḷ* (grace) (PP. 507)⁴⁴¹.

Though there is no clear evidence to prove that the *nāyaṇmār* imitated *Śiva*, however, *Cēkṇilār* narrates there is a certain sense of 'madness' created by ecstatic awareness instilled by *Śiva*'s *aruḷ* (grace) of all that the world offers. In this ecstatic awareness the *nāyaṇmār* co-mingled in the divine madness of *Śiva*; His devotees also appear to be mad with ardent desire to be at His service. What is important to note is primarily that *Śiva* both represent in himself and offers His devotees participation in a

attacked and disrupted the proceedings. He beheaded *Dakṣa* and cast his head into the fire. When the gods begged for mercy, *Śiva* restored the sacrifice and revived *Dakṣa*, giving the head as of a goat. This myth also seems to reflect the process whereby from the position of an outsider, *Śiva* was accepted as a member of the post-Vedic pantheon.

⁴³⁹ '...திருக்குறுக்கைப்பதி மன்னித் திருவீரட்டானத்து அமர்ந்த...' (பெ.பு.2192). The place திருவீரட்டானத்து (*Tiruvīraṭṭāṇam*) referred here is the place where *Śiva* incinerated *Kāmaṇ*. According to the myth the demons were causing trouble to the gods, Brahma revealed that the demons could only be defeated by a son of *Śiva*. Then gods then had to devise a way to induce *Śiva* and *Pārvati* to get together to produce a son. So they sent the love god, *Kāmaṇ*, with instructions to use his bow and flower arrows to enkindle desire in the couple. *Śiva* was seated in a meditative trance when *Kāmaṇ* found him. Displeased at being disturbed, and suspicious of *Kāmaṇ*'s intentions, *Śiva* opened his third eye and burnt *Kāmaṇ* to ashes. *Pārvati* was not happy with this outcome, and at her intercession *Śiva* restored *Kāmaṇ* to life. In this myth, *Kāmaṇ* is portrayed as a great ascetic, and besides the familiar tension between god and demons, we see here another tension, that between the ascetic and erotic.

⁴⁴⁰ '...வேதியர்ஆய் மாயவண்ணமே கொண்டுதம் தொண்டர் மாறாத வண்ணமும் காட்டுவான் வந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 407).

⁴⁴¹ '...மறைக்குலத்துஒரு பிரமசாரியின் வடிவு ஆகி' (பெ.பு. 507).

new kind of awareness, a type of realization opposed to ordinary modes of experience. We might call it a mystical state of consciousness where not just social segregation based on caste system is abandoned, but a sense of being in His service is instilled. Such utter spontaneity is unintelligible, and perhaps madness is a profound image of what it must be like. At one instance *Cēkkiḷār* shows that the *nāyaṇār* addressed *Śiva* in the following way:

‘*Śiva* clothed in the elephant’s skin! *Śiva*, strength of the defenceless!
Śiva wisdom of your devotees! *Śiva*, nectar of the enlightened!...
 The flowers to adorn your matted locks, the elephant has scattered in the street!
Śiva in your wrath you burnt the cities of your enemies’ (PP. 566-567)⁴⁴².

In another occasion that the *Kāraikkal nāyaṇār* with full conviction prayed to the Lord:

“If this is where he stands, may I now lay aside this comeliness and the burden of the flesh which I have borne for his sake. Grant me to your servant that I may come and worship at your feet in the form of a disembodied wrath. By the grace of the divine dancer ... she received the boon for which she prayed. Immersed in the rising tide of heavenly wisdom and ever more conscious of the divine she sang “I have become one of the heavenly hosts, which worships his red lotus feet” (PP. 1770-1773)⁴⁴³.

Although in these narrations *Śiva* is perceived and presented conceptually as ‘wisdom of your devotees’ (அளியார் அடியார் அடியே: *aḷiyār aṭiyār aṭiyē*) and the ‘nectar of the enlightened’ (தெளிவார் அதே சிவதா: *teḷivār atē Śivatā*) as a mode of ‘wisdom’ opposed to ordinary consciousness, knowledge and intellect, by reference to *Kāraikkal nāyaṇār*’s realization of *Śiva* as ‘wisdom’ (உற்பவித்து எழுந்த ஞாலத்து: *urpavittu elunta ṇālattu*); ‘wisdom’ is objectified, concretized in *Śiva* who in His ‘wrath

⁴⁴² ‘களியா ணையின் ஈர் உரியாய் சிவதா. எளியார் வலியாம் இறைவா சிவதா அளியார் அடியார் அடியே சிவதா. தெளிவார் அதே சிவதா சிவதா. ... ஆறும் மதியும் அணியும் சடைமேல் ஏறும் மலரைக் கரிசிந்துவதே வேறுஉள் நினைவார் புரம்வெந்து அவியச் சீறும் சிலையாய் சிவதா சிவதா. (பெ.பு. 566-567).

⁴⁴³ ‘ஈங்கு இவன் குறித்த கொள்கை இது இனி இவனுக்காகத் தாங்கிய வனப்பு நின்ற தசைப்பொதி கழிந்து இங்கு உன்பால் ஆங்கு நின் தாள்கள் போற்றும் பேய்வடிவு அடியேனுக்குப் பாங்குற வேண்டும் என்று பரமர் தான் பரவி நின்றார்’. ‘ஆன அப்பொழுது மன்றுள் ஆடுவார் அருளினாலே மேல்நெறி உணர்வு கூர வேண்டிற்றே பெறுவார் மெய்ளில்...’ உற்பவித்து எழுந்த ஞாலத்து ஒருமையின் உமைகோலன் தன்னை அற்புதத் திருவந்தாதி அப்பொழுது அருளிச் செய்வார்’ (பெ.பு. 1770-1773).

burnt the cities of [His] enemies’ (வேறுஉள் நினைவார் புரம்வெந்து அவியச் சீறும் சிலையாய்: *vēru’uḷ niṇaivār puramventu aviyac cīrum cilaiyāya*). Two aspects of *Cēkkiḷār*’s vision of *Śiva* is clear: first, an abstract philosophical notion of Him as ‘Wisdom of devotees’, and second, myth relating to the ‘popular’ manifestation of *Śiva*, for example, *Śiva* as one who in His ‘wrath burnt the cities of [His] enemies’. These aspects link the distinction between *Śiva* of *nāyaṇmār*’s personal experience and the more ‘popular’ images of *Śiva* presented in myths and epics. The philosophical notions and local myths can be understood as expressions of both the *Śiva* public personality and the *nāyaṇmār*’s personal comprehension of *Śiva*. We shall next attend to these other additional aspects of *Cēkkiḷār*’s image of *Siva*.

5.3 The Philosophical Notions and Indigenous Myths

In the *Periya Purāṇam* there are numerous quasi–philosophical names attributed to *Śiva* centred around the ideas of lordship. The single-word titles of Him i.e. *Śiva* which are presented in the *Periya Purāṇam* suggests His dominion, for example, *nāyan* (நாயன்நீரே) – ‘master’ or ‘leader (PP. 3487)⁴⁴⁴, *īcaṇ* (ஈசன்) – ‘Lord’ (PP. 1750)⁴⁴⁵, *iraivaṇ* (இறைவன்) – ‘supreme one’ (PP. 1249)⁴⁴⁶, *Tēvartēva* (தேவர்தேவ) - God of gods (PP. 2981)⁴⁴⁷. To these one-word title phrases also are dedicated which specify *Śiva* as the creator and the foundation of the universe. In single verse in the *Periya Purāṇam* *Śiva* is clearly spoken

⁴⁴⁴ ‘நாயன்நீரே நான்உமக்கு இங்கு அடியேன் ஆகிநீர் எனக்குத் தாயின் நல்ல தோழரும்...’ (பெ.பு. 3487).

⁴⁴⁵ According to the Tamil Lexicon of Madras University the word *īcaṇ* (ஈசன்) has several meaning. It is used to denote *Śiva*. *Śiva* has (i) Supreme Lord of the universe; இறைவன், (ii) King, ruler; அரசன், (iii) Lord, master; தலைவன், (iv) Preceptor; குரு, (v) Eldest brother; முத்தோன்.

⁴⁴⁶ The word *iraivaṇ* (இறைவன்) is derived from the root *iru* (இறு) meaning all-abiding. One who abides i.e. abiding is spoken of as *irai* (இறை) meaning moment of time. The same word is used to address someone who is (i) chief, master, superior; தலைவன். (ii) Supreme God; கடவுள். (iii) King; அரசன். (iv) Husband; lord, in relation to a wife; கணவன்; (v) Elder, venerable person; முத்தோன்; (vi) preceptor; குரு.

⁴⁴⁷ ‘தேவர்தேவனைத் திருக்கபாலீச்சரத்து அமுதைப் பாவை...’ (பெ.பு. 2981).

of as ‘the beginning and the middle’ (ஆதிஆய நடுவும்: *āti'āya naṭuvum*), ‘measure without measure’ (அளவுஇலா அளவும்: *aḷavu'ilā aḷavum*), ‘light that illumines the human understanding’ (சோதிஆய் உணர்வும்: *cōti'āy uṇarvum*); ‘all created matter’ (தோன்றிய பொருளும்: *tōṇriya poruḷum*), ‘one without division’ (பேதியா ஏகம்: *pētiyā ēkam*) and ‘male and female’ (பெண்ணும் ஆய் ஆணும்: *peṇṇum āy āṇum*) (PP. 350)⁴⁴⁸.

In the hagiography, *Cēkkiḷār* also speaks of *Śiva* as one who is beyond human vision; he is ‘hard to see’ or He is ‘seldom to be seen’ (‘அரிய காட்சியார்’ : *ariya kāṭciyār*) (PP.2728)⁴⁴⁹. Yet *Cēkkiḷār* notes, ‘He is great – apart from those symbols, the universe, the five elements, the heavenly bodies and untold myriad souls constitute his visible form’ (PP. 2730)⁴⁵⁰. Then *Cēkkiḷār* wonders ‘who can know what he is like?’... ‘His eternal nature is limitless, beyond reach of human knowledge’ (PP. 2731)⁴⁵¹. Furthermore *Cēkkiḷār* asserts that ‘he has neither father nor mother’ it implies *Cēkkiḷār* notes ‘He is he creates all things in the world. Then when they pass away, they are reabsorbed into him in a moment of time, before he brings them to birth once more. But He is not subject to repeated births (PP. 2732)⁴⁵².

Cēkkiḷār pronounces that ‘the primal Lord bestows in *aruḷ* (grace) on those whom he has made his own’ – on enquiry, the glory of the Lord proves to be without end or

⁴⁴⁸ ‘ஆதியாய் நடுவுமாகி அளவு இலா அளவுமாகிச் சோதியாய் உணர்வுமாகித் தோன்றிய பொருளுமாகிப் பேதியா ஏகம் ஆகிப் பெண்ணுமாய் ஆணும் ஆகிப் பேதியா நிற்கும் தில்லைப் பொது நடம் போற்றி போற்றி’ (பெ.பு. 350).

⁴⁴⁹ ‘அரிய காட்சியார் என்பது அவ் ஆதியைத் தெரியலாம்...’ (பெ.பு. 2728).

⁴⁵⁰ ‘ஆயினும் பெரியார் ஆவர் என்பது மேயஇவ் இயல்பே அன்றி விண்முதல் புய பூதங்கள் பல்உயிர் அண்டங்கள் ஏயும் யாவும் இவர்வடிவு என்றதாம்’ (பெ.பு. 2729).

⁴⁵¹ ‘பின்பும் ஆர்அறிவார் அவர் பெற்றியே என்பதுயார் உணர்வானும் சென்று எட்ட ஒணா மன்பெருந் தன்மையார் என வாழ்த்தினார் அன்பு சூழ்சண்பை ஆண்டகை யார்அவர்’ (பெ.பு. 2730).

⁴⁵² ‘தமக்குத் தந்தையார் தாய்இலர் என்பதும் அமைத்து இங்கு யாவையும் ஆங்கு அவை வீந்தபோது இமைத்தசோதி அடக்கிப்பின் ஈதலால் எமக்கு நாதர் பிறப்பிலர் என்றதாம்’ (பெ.பு. 2732)

limit. Therefore no purpose is served by investigation’ (PP. 2735)⁴⁵³. ‘By logic – there is nothing in the world that can be compared to him’. His ‘character cannot be measured by logic or analogy’ (PP. 2737)⁴⁵⁴. He is ‘primal Lord of the Vedas’ (வேதமுதல்வன்: *vētamutalvaṇ*) (PP. 2743)⁴⁵⁵; His ‘dancing feet dispel the troubles of the people of the world as they engage in praising Him’ (PP. 2743)⁴⁵⁶. In short, for *Cēkḱilār*, *Śiva* is the ‘rare’ one (அரியவன்: *ariyavaṇ*) (PP.1)⁴⁵⁷ who is ‘hard to see’ (அரிய காட்சியார்: *ariya kāṭciyār*) (PP. 2728)⁴⁵⁸.

A clear philosophical verse which combines notions of transcendence and immanence of *Śiva* in *Periya Purāṇam* is found on the narration of the Brahmins of *Tillai*. It is stated:

‘He is light imaginable, the embodiment of compassion, whose form is wonderful; He dwells in the sacred court, the divine space that transcends the summit of Vedas; there he performs his exquisite dance. All praise to his flowers anklet (PP. 351)⁴⁵⁹. He stands teaching in the sacred court at Tillai. All praise to his sacred dance! (PP.350)⁴⁶⁰.

It is clear *Cēkḱilār* contrasts philosophical concepts with mention of local sacred places i.e. sacred court at *Tillai* which had great personal significance in *nāyaṇmār*’s life. With

⁴⁵³ ‘ஆதி ஆள்பால் அவர்க்கு அருளும்திறம் நாதன் மாட்சிமை கேட்க நவிலுங்கால் ஓதும் எல்லை உவப்பு இலஆதலின் யாதும் ஆராய்ச்சி இல்லையாம் என்றதாம்’ (பெ.பு. 2735).
⁴⁵⁴ ‘மன்னும் ஏதுக்களால் எனும் வாய்மைதான் தன்னது ஒப்புவேறு இன்மையில் சங்கரன் இன்ன தன்மையை ஏது எடுத்துக்காட்டு அன்னவற்றால் அளப்பிலன் என்னதாம்’ (பெ.பு. 2737).
⁴⁵⁵ ‘வேதமுதல்வன் எனும் மெய்த்திருப் பாட்டினில் நேர்...’ (பெ.பு. 2743).
⁴⁵⁶ ‘வேதமுதல்வன் எனும் மெய்த்திருப் பாட்டினில் நேர் ஆதிஉலகோர் இடர்நீங்கிட ஏத்த ஆடும் பாதமுதல் ஆம்பதினெண் புராணங்கள் என்றே ஓது என்று உரைசெய்தனர் யாவும் ஓதாது உணர்ந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 2743).
⁴⁵⁷ ‘உலகு எலாம் உணர்ந்து ஓதற்கு அரியவன்...’ (பெ.பு. 1).
⁴⁵⁸ ‘அரிய காட்சியார் என்பது அவ் ஆதியைத் தெரியலாம்...’ (பெ.பு. 2728).
⁴⁵⁹ ‘கற்பனை கடந்த சோதி கருணையே உருவம் ஆகி அற்புதக் கோலம் நீடி அருமறைச் சிரத்தின் மேல் ஆம் சிற்பிர வியோகம் ஆகும் திருச்சிறும்பலத்துள் நின்று பொற்பு உற நடம் செய்கின்ற பூங்கழல் போற்றி போற்றி’ (பெ.பு. 351).
⁴⁶⁰ ‘போதியா நிற்கும் தில்லைப் பொது நடம் போற்றி போற்றி...’ (பெ.பு. 350).

this *Cēkḱilār* also mentions ‘Śiva is all in all’ (PP. 2750)⁴⁶¹. Therefore, ‘by meditating on him alone as the one true, shining light, he dispels the darkness of falsehood and of actions good and bad’ (PP. 2733)⁴⁶².

Further *Cēkḱilār* proclaims Śiva as the ‘endless one’ or ‘eternal one’ (அந்தம் இல்லவர்: *antam illavar*) (PP.2275)⁴⁶³, ‘essence of the Vedas’ (வேதமூலம்: *vētamūlam*) (PP. 43)⁴⁶⁴, ‘true’ (மெய்மை: *meimai*) (PP. 2641)⁴⁶⁵ and ‘eternal truth’ (மெய்ப்பொருள்: *meipporuḷ*) (PP. 2687)⁴⁶⁶. These fairly intellectual apprehensions of Śiva, remarkably, more commonly encountered in *Cēkḱilār*’s hagiography than the *nāyaṇmār*’s more sensual, personal experience of Śiva as light (PP. 1902)⁴⁶⁷ and bliss (PP. 272)⁴⁶⁸. To these less abstract attributes *Cēkḱilār* adds images which are Tamil in character in which Śiva is presented as ‘nectar of those who have attained clarity of mind’ (PP. 816)⁴⁶⁹ and ‘He is gentle and sweet to those who know him’ (PP. 2305)⁴⁷⁰. In another instance, *Cēkḱilār* sings of Śiva: ‘His sacred feet, like the red lotus, blossom in the heart of those who love Him. Around those feet, like beetles round the lotus flower, resound the

⁴⁶¹ ‘எம்பிரான் சிவனே எல்லாப் பொருளும்...’ (பெ.பு. 2750).

⁴⁶² ‘தம்மையே சிந்தியா எனும் தன்மைதான் மெய்ம்மை ஆகிவிளங்கு ஒளிதாம்என இம்மையே நினைவார்தம் இருவினைப் பொய்ம்மைவல் இருள் போக்குவர் என்றதாம்’ (பெ.பு. 2733).

⁴⁶³ ‘...அந்தம் இல்லவர் வண்ணம் ஆர்அழல் வண்ணம் என்று...’ (பெ.பு. 2275).

⁴⁶⁴ ‘பூதம் யாவையின் உள்அலர் போதுஎன வேதமூலம் வெளிப்படு மேதினிக்...’ (பெ.பு. 43).

⁴⁶⁵ ‘...பாலறாவாயர் மெய்ம்மை நோக்கி வண்தமிழ்செய்...’ (பெ.பு. 2641).

⁴⁶⁶ ‘... மன்னும் மெய்ப்பொருள் ஆம்எனக் காட்டிட வன்னி தன்னில் ஆகஎனத்...’ (பெ.பு. 2687).

⁴⁶⁷ ‘இன்ன வகையால் திருப்பணிகள் எல்லாம் உலகும் தொழ்ச்செய்து நன்மைபெருகும் நமிநந்தி சென்னி மதியும் திருந்தியும் அலைய வருவார் திருவாரூர் மன்னர் பாத நீழல்மிகும் வளர் பொன்சோதி மன்னினார் திருவீதியிலே திருமுடியில் சந்திரனும் கங்கையும்’ (பெ.பு. 1902).

⁴⁶⁸ ‘அன்பு பெருக உருகி உள்ளம் அலைய அட்டாங்க பஞ்சாங்கம் ஆக முன்பு முறைமையினால் வணங்கி முடிவு இலாக்காதல் முதிர்ஓங்கி நன்புலன் ஆகிய ஐந்தும் ஒன்றி நாயகன் சேவடி எய்தப்பெற்ற இன்பவெள்ளத்திடை மூழ்கி நின்றே இன்னிசை வண்தமிழ் மலைபாட’ (பெ.பு. 272).

⁴⁶⁹ ‘... தேறுவார்க்கு அமுதம் ஆன செல்வனார்...’ (பெ.பு. 816).

⁴⁷⁰ ‘...நுகர்கின்ற தொண்டர் தமக்கு அமுதுஆகி நொய்யாணைத் தகவு...’ (பெ.பு. 2305).

everlasting Vedas, now those feet stand before me unworthy as I am, and have vouchsafed to me the wine of heavenly bliss' (PP. 337)⁴⁷¹.

It must be noted *Cēkkiḷār* is fond of the language of paradox, which when presented in philosophical concepts resonates the images of the *Śiva* based on His mythology and the *nāyaṇmār's* personal experience of Him. The methodology is generally to see *Śiva* both something and its contrary or neither. Thus, *Śiva* is presented has 'beginning, middle and the end' (ஆதிஆய நடுவும் ஆகி: *āti'āya naṭuvum āki*) (PP. 350), 'male and female' (பெண்ணுமாய் ஆணும் ஆகிப்: *peṇṇumāy āṇum ākip*) (PP. 350)⁴⁷².

In addition to such titles of *Śiva*, He is also identified as the Lord of the Tamils. In several places *Cēkkiḷār* makes references to the *Caṅkam* assemblies (PP. 977)⁴⁷³ and emphasis that it was *Śiva* who presided over this academy of Tamil and expounded the true meaning of the Tamil texts (PP. 1673)⁴⁷⁴. Most concrete association of *Śiva* with the *Tamiḷnāṭu* is found in the narration which present Him as peculiarly related to or identified with specific temple and sacred places through *Tamiḷnāṭu* which had a great

⁴⁷¹ 'மன்பெருந்திரு மாமறை வண்டு சூழ்ந்து அன்பர் சிந்தை அலர்ந்த செந்தாமரை நன்பெரும் பரமானந்த நல்மது எந்தரத்தும் அளித்து எதிர்நின்றன' (பெ.பு. 337).

⁴⁷² 'ஆதிஆய நடுவும் ஆகி அளவுஇலா அளவும் ஆகிச் ... பெண்ணும் ஆய் ஆணும் ஆகிப் ...' (பெ.பு. 350).

⁴⁷³ '... முதுதார் நூல்பாய் இடத்தும் உள நோன்தலை மேதி பாயப் பால்பாய் முலைதோய் மதுப்பங்கயம் பாய எங்கும் சேல்பாய் தடத்தும் உள செய்யுள் மிக்கு ஏறுசங்கம்' (பெ.பு. 977).

'...Madurai, the home of the academies where poets read their works and where the three branches of Tamil culture flourished in the schools...' (PP. 977).

⁴⁷⁴ 'சென்று அணைந்து மதுரையினில் திருந்திய நூல் சங்கத்துள் அன்று இருந்து தமிழ் ஆராய்ந்து அருளிய ...' (பெ.பு. 1673)

'He moved in and came to the shrine of the Lord, who presided over the academy of Tamil...' (PP. 1673).

personal significance to the *nāyaṇmār* (PP. 496)⁴⁷⁵. The remarkable religiosity and the ability of the *nāyaṇmār* to give concrete spatial attention to their devotion as delineated in this narration is testimony to their love of *Śiva*.

However, the place that received special attention in the *Periya Purāṇam*, which had an impact of the *nāyaṇmār*'s religiosity, is the 'Sacred Court at *Tillai*' (PP. 1065)⁴⁷⁶. It is here at *Tillai* (தில்லை), it is narrated, that *Śiva* 'performs his exquisite dance' (PP 351)⁴⁷⁷. In another verse *Cēkkiḷār* notes that he performs His dance 'beyond the bounds of space and time' (PP. 251)⁴⁷⁸. Though this dance of *Śiva* is primarily cosmic, it is believed that it is located in place called *Tillai*, which is considered as the centre of the universe. 'The dancer' or 'Lord of the Dance' (நடனம் ஆடுகின்றாரை: *naṭaṇam āṭukiṇṇārāi*) is indeed the favourite attribute used to denote *Śiva* in the *Periya Purāṇam*.⁴⁷⁹ For the *nāyaṇmār* as *Cēkkiḷār* notes *Tillai* is the place of conversion and the place of final consummation: He notes 'those who worship here are freed from the three

⁴⁷⁵ 'பொன்தாழ் அருவி மலைநாடு கடந்து கடல் சூழ்புவி எங்கும் சென்று அருளுடையார் ஆடியவர் தம் திண்மை ஒழுக்க நடைசெலுத்தி வந்தான் மேருச் சிலைவளைத்துப் புரங்கள் செற்று வைதிகத்தேர் நின்றார் இருந்த திருவாரூர் பணிந்தார் நிகர் ஒன்று இல்லாதார்' (பெ.பு. 496).

It is stated in the hymn that 'in this way he passed through the hill country and traversed the whole sea-grit world, strengthening the devotees in the path of *Śiva*. So he came to Tiruvārūr, and worshipped the Lord who used Mount Mēru as his bow in the destruction of the three cities' (PP. 496).

⁴⁷⁶ 'இத்தன்மை ஈசர் மகிழ்ப்பதி பலவும் சென்று இறைஞ்சி மெய்த்ததிருத்தொண்டு செய்து விரவுவார் மிக்கு எழுந்த சித்தமொடும் திருத்தில்லைத் திருமன்று சென்று இறைஞ்ச உயர்ந்த பெருங்காதல் உணர்வு ஒழியாது வந்து உதிப்ப' (பெ.பு. 1065).

'in the same way he journeyed to many shrines where God is pleased to dwell. At each one he offered worship and with heartfelt devotion performed his acts of service. One day a burning desire arose in Nantaṇār's heart to go to the temple at Tillai and offer worship there. Once the great longing had arisen, it would not go away' (PP. 1065).

⁴⁷⁷ '...திருச்சிற்றம்பலத்துள் நின்று பொற்பு உற நடம் செய்கின்ற பூங்கழல் போற்றி போற்றி' (பெ.பு. 351).

⁴⁷⁸ 'வையகம் பொலிய மறைச்சிலம்பு ஆர்ப்ப மன்றுளே மால் அயன் தேட ஐயர்தாம் வெளியே ஆடுகின்றாரை அஞ்சலி மலர்த்தின்முன்...' (பெ.பு.251).

⁴⁷⁹ According to tradition, it is claimed that there lived some false sages in a thick forest who decided to destroy the *Śiva* by means of evil mantras. They created a tiger and rushed upon *Śiva*; the Lord gently killed it and wrapped himself with the skin of the tiger. Unshaken by what had happened, they then sent a serpent, but *Śiva* kindly took it and put it around his neck like a garland. Next, they then sent a dwarf; the *Śiva* broke began its back. *Śiva* resumed his dance again.

defilements and granted entry into heaven' (PP. 238)⁴⁸⁰. As can be seen in the *Periya Purāṇam*, the *nāyaṇmār* travelled as extensively to propagate their devotion; one such famous journey is that of the *Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār* to *Tillai* (PP. 1725-1787)⁴⁸¹.

In order to establish further the notion of *Śiva*'s act of madness or one may call a fanatical, His spontaneous action which appear to be 'violent', which is an attribute that

⁴⁸⁰ '...மும்மை மாமலங்கள் அறவீடு அருள் தில்லை...' (பெ.பு. 238).

⁴⁸¹ This *nāyaṇmār* was the only daughter of a very rich merchant in *Karaikkal*. She was christened at birth as *punithavathi* (புனிதவதி i.e. 'saintly one') but was later reverently hailed as by no less a person than Lord *Śiva* Himself as '*ammaiye*' (அம்மை) – 'O Mother of Mine' ! and not so reverently referred to by *Cuntarar* in his poem by the single word '*peyār*' (பேயார் : ghost), unadorned by any adjectives, was an exception. She was full of all the house-wifely virtues. If devotee of the Lord came, she served them good unpolluted food and gave them gold and gems whichever they needed. One day, her husband sent from his shop two mangoes with instructions to keep them for his dinner. But before he could come, a devotee came and she, as was her custom, respectfully invited him to partake of food in her house. But, as the vegetable curry was not yet ready, it occurred to her that the mango would be suitable side-dish for the devotee and, accordingly, served him one of the two, which he ate with relish and went, is way. In due course, the husband came and sat for his dinner. When he was taking his food, she brought the remaining mango and served it to him. The fruit was so delicious that he asked her to serve him the other one too! She left place as if she was going to fetch it. She became lost in thought, but the moment she recollected in her mind the feet of the Lord astride the bull who helps one in distress, in her hand reposed an extraordinary sweet fruit. When the husband heard that it was by God's grace, he would not believe it. Overcome with fear and his mind in a whirl, he thought the lady of bejeweled tresses was some strange goddess, and deciding to leave her, did not tell anyone about it, but lived apart without relationship with her. Very soon, the husband equipped a ship for a mercantile expedition and departed from *Karaikkal* to a country he had in mind. There he prospered exceedingly well and in course of time, he married the daughter of a local merchant and had a daughter by whom he named '*punithavathi*' (புனிதவதி i.e. 'saintly one') in memory of his godly wife. Words reached the father of our lady that her husband was living thus in a town in *Pāṇṭināṭu*, and he forthwith, collected some his relatives and took her down to that town with the intention of confronting his son-in-law with his wronged wife. When *punithavathi*'s estranged husband saw them along with his new wife and toddler bowed to the feet of the doe-like wife and said:

'I am leading my life here by your grace only, and, on that account, this little child bears your name,' he fell prostrate before her. Further he replied:

'she i.e. *punithavathi* is not a human being: after I learnt of her being a very great god I left her, and I have named after her this child which I later begot; this is why I fell at her golden feet; do you too similarly worship her'

Then *punithavathi* said with a heart surcharged with emotion:

'This mass of beauty-laden flesh, which I endured for this man's sake, I should discard here, and I should get an appropriate wraith's form with which I may pay obeisance to your feet there' Saying so, she meditated on the feet of the Lord. She was filled with an overpowering desire to go to the *Kailās* mountain, the abode of *Śivan*. Crossing all the mountain, giving up walking on her feet, she ascended to the mountain *Kailās* walking on her head. When the Lord *Śiva* saw this, he exclaimed 'Oh! My Mother! and proclaimed 'that the world may be redeemed'. And he graciously commanded her to go to the ancient town of *ālangkātu* and witness His great dance, and, ever filled with bliss, sing His praises. Even so, she walked back to *ālangkātu* and there abode and sang in several poems the praises of the Lord. There has been no one else among the devotees of *Śivan* who reached the *Kailās* mountain and came back. She was an ideal wife, an ideal devotee of God. Love of the Lord was her equipment, love was her craving, love was her life, and love was her boon.

is often stressed in, by *Cēkḱilār*, it would be useful to refer to local myths that are alluded to in the *Periya Purāṇam*. They should give us ample evidence of *Śiva*'s act of madness. For instance, the myth of *Śiva*'s reincarnation as a *Kōccenkaṭ Cōla* (PP. 4205-4219)⁴⁸² differ from the myth about *Śiva*'s incineration and restoration of *Kāmaṇ*. A good example of local myth which has a cosmic dimension myths associated with stories of the origin and establishment of a shrine is that of the temple of *Cīkālī* which survives the cosmic deluge (PP. 260)⁴⁸³ and the appearance of the *lingam* in the ant-hill at *Tiruvārūr* (PP. 271)⁴⁸⁴. Hence, in the *Periya Purāṇam* there is an attempt to link the cosmic deeds and forms of *Śiva* with his local acts and persona.

It is interesting note in the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkḱilār* while emphasising the cosmic acts of *Śiva* also emphasises of His acts with those that he performed out of compassion for the *nāyaṇmār* such as *Kaṇṇappar nāyaṇār* (PP. 650-830)⁴⁸⁵. The story of the *Kaṇṇappar nāyaṇār* is interspersed with the myths found in epics and *Purāṇās* for example *Bhagīratha*⁴⁸⁶, a myth mentioned above, who is considered by Tamil *Śaivites* to be paradigmatic of certain attitudes of devotion to *Śiva*. *Śiva* is the one who rescues

⁴⁸² For the story of this devotee, see p.144.

⁴⁸³ 'இருக்கோலம் இடும் பெருமான் எதிர் நின்று எழுந்தருள வெருக்கோள் உற்றுஅது நீங்க ஆருர்மேல் செலவிரும்பிப் பெருக்கு ஓதம் சூழ்புறவப் பெரும்பதியை வணங்கிப் போய்த் திருக்கோலக் கா இறைஞ்சிச் செந்தமிழ் மாலைகள் பாடி' (பெ.பு. 260).

'When the Lord appeared in grace before him, Nampi was filled with fear. As his fear subsided, the desire to press on to Tiruvārūr returned. So having venerated the shrine of Cīkālī from a distance, he journeyed on to Tirukōlakkā, where he offered worship and sung garlands of Tamil song' (PP. 260).

⁴⁸⁴ 'புற்று இடம்கொண்ட புராதனனைப் பூங்கோயில் மேயபிராணை யார்க்கும் பற்றுஇடம் ஆய பரம் பொருளைப் பார்ப்பதி பாகனைப் பங்கயத்தாள் அர்ச்சனை செய்ய அருள்புரிந்த அண்ணலை மண்மிசை வீழ்ந்து இறைஞ்சி நல்தமிழ் நாவலர்கோன் உடம்பால் நன்மையின் தன்மையை மெய்ம்மை பெற்றார்' (பெ.பு. 271)

'There before the sanctum, he fell to the ground in adoration, worshipping the ancient one who made his dwelling in the ant-hill, the Lord who dwells in the Flower Temple, the Supreme who offer refuge to all, the one of whom Pārvaṭi is a part, the great one who in grace allows his devotees to worship at his lotus feet' (PP. 271).

⁴⁸⁵ For the story of this devotee, see p.50.

⁴⁸⁶ For details on this myth, see. p. 160-161

Tirunāvukkaracar from persecution from the others (PP. 1271-1699). He is the one who conferred *arul* (grace) upon *Caṇṭēcurar* who has cut off his own father's leg because he kicked at the *Śiva*-lingam that the *nāyaṇār* was worshipping (PP. 1211-1270)⁴⁸⁷. *Śiva* is the one who shown His gracious acts or deeds towards *Kōccenkaṭ Cōlar*, the spider-turned-king, and *Kaṇṇappar* the hunter who gave *Śiva* his eye. *Śiva* destroys the triple city of the demons (PP. 1307)⁴⁸⁸. He bears the Ganges on his head (PP. 1)⁴⁸⁹. He shows himself as an infinite, cosmic *lingam* to other gods (PP. 18)⁴⁹⁰. Furthermore, *Śiva* is presented as one who goes so far as to suffer for his devotees. Evermore is the fact, it highlights the fact that *Śiva* is a god of *arul* (grace) who acts in sense of ‘madness’ due to His love for His devotees. He is ‘supreme the one whom *Umā* is a part, the great one who in *arul* (grace) allows his devotees to worship at his lotus feet’ (PP. 271)⁴⁹¹.

It is clear in virtually every place where *Śiva* is referred to in *Cēkkiḷār*’s work, as shown above, one or more conventional attributes together with ingenious ones drawn from rich iconography of *Śiva* are mentioned. So they become pointers to him, or short-hand ways of recalling the visual memories of a familiar beloved image. An often stated

⁴⁸⁷ For the story of this devotee, see p. 145.

⁴⁸⁸ ‘...நீள்கரையில் நீடுபெருஞ் சீர்ஆர் திருஅதிகை வீரட்டாணம் சேர்ந்தார்...’ (பெ.பு. 1312).

⁴⁸⁹ ‘உலகு எல்லாம் உணர்ந்து ஓதற்கு அரியவன் நிலவுஉலாவிய நீர்மலி வேணியன் அலகுஇல் சோதியன் அம்பலத்து ஆடுவான் மலர்சிலம்பு அடி வாழ்த்தி வணங்குவாம்’ (பெ.பு. 1).

⁴⁹⁰ ‘காதில் வெண்குழையோன் கழல்தொழ நெடியோன் காலம் பார்த்து இருந்ததும் அறியான் சோதிவெண் கயிலைத் தாழ்வாரை முழையில் துதிக்கையோன் ஊர்தியைக் கண்டு மீதுஎழு பண்டைச் செஞ்சுடர் இன்று வெண்சுடர் ஆனதுஎன்று அதன்கீழ் ஆதி ஏனமதாய் இடக்கல் உற்றான் என்று அதனை வந்து அனைதரும் கலுழன்’ (பெ.பு. 18).

In this myth *Cēkkiḷār* narrates that *Tirumāl* and *Ayaṇ*, the two gods proceed to argue about which is the supreme God and creator of the world. At that moment *Śiva* manifests himself as a towering lingam of fire, which stretches from the ocean up into the heavens. The two gods seek to measure its extent, *Ayaṇ* by flying upwards as a swan, and *Tirumāl* by digging downwards as a boar. Their attempt ends in failure, and the cosmic lingam bursts open to reveal none other than the Lord *Śiva*. As the two rivals bow before him, *Śiva* proclaims himself to be the Lord of all. The myth is often cited by *Cēkkiḷār Śiva*’s matchless nature, and in particular his pre-eminence over *Tirumāl* and *Ayaṇ*.

⁴⁹¹ ‘...பொருளைப் பார்ப்பதி பாகனைப் பங்கயத்தான் அர்ச்சனை செய்ய அருள்புரிந்த அண்ணலை மண்மிசை வீழ்ந்து இறைஞ்சி நல்தமிழ் நாவலர்கோன் உடம்பால் நன்மையின் தன்மையை மெய்ம்மை பெற்றார்’ (பெ.பு. 271).

aim of religious pilgrimage in *nāyaṇār*'s religiosity is to see *Śiva* at a given shrine, and the very sight of him can give untold joy. This highlights the fact that the *nāyaṇār*'s devotion relies on the sense of sight of *Śiva* which for them give untold joy. Neither the local myths nor the philosophical concepts alter the *nāyaṇār*'s experientially based image previously discussed; they merely serve to broaden and deepen it. Hence, it is obvious that the *Periya Purāṇam* presents a richly textured image of *Śiva* drawn from pan-Indian myths, symbol, local tradition, and philosophical concept and the above all the *nāyaṇār*'s experientially based image of *Śiva*.

5.4 Summary

Cēkkiḷār's *Periya Purāṇam* is not a systematic treatise on philosophy or theology. It is a hagiography. It does not argue or analyse; rather it praise the life of the *nāyaṇmār* whose devotion was manifested in service and their moral living. Nonetheless, it is in those narrations philosophical ways of addressing *Śiva* are founded. This philosophy of *Cēkkiḷār* or rather his philosophical understanding of *Śiva*'s nature can be understood as a philosophy by appellation rather than a philosophy by logical reasoning. It is clear that *Cēkkiḷār* uses images and metaphors to present his theological vision of *Śiva* rather than abstract and discursive rational thought.

By doing so, *Cēkkiḷār* affirms *Śiva* as 'dancer' (நடராசன்: *naṭarācaṇ*) as a dominant feature. It is this which underlies, bonds, and animates the various other aspects of Him; all converge around the image of His 'dance'. Whatever *Śiva* does, He does out of His 'madness' – with a sense of fanatical love He has for His devotees. Release (*vīṭu*: விடு), grace (*aruḷ*: அருள்) and 'madness' (*pittan*: பித்தன்) are all aspects of *Śiva*'s

dance. To be released, to be free of bondage, is to join *Śiva* in a realm transcending purposive action, effort, and the nexus of cause and effect. Likewise, *Śiva's aruḷ* (grace) is undeserved and free. This makes *Śiva* the ultimate significance of the *nāyaṇmār's* life who is experienced and expressed in devotion as a personal God. The significant feature of *Cēkkiḷār's Śiva* as a personal God is that He is the God of love. *Śiva's* deeds, incarnation and compassion, are all centred on the image of *Śiva*. *Śiva* is madly in love with his devotees.

It is also significant that *Cēkkiḷār* often identifies the dance of *Śiva* with the *Naṭarācaṇ-Śiva* of *Tillai*. This cosmic dance is interpreted as *Śiva's* cosmic deed of creation. It is, in this deed the *nāyaṇmār* long to participate. *Śiva's* granting of *aruḷ* (grace), intervention and possession of his devotees, are accomplished as a part of his deeds. It should also be noted that *Śiva*, as presented in the *Periya Purāṇam*, acts out of purpose which is to be noted in *Cēkkiḷār's* theological vision. This vision offers a distinct image of *Śiva* as the personal God of the *nāyaṇmār's* devotion. This generates a new kind of realization, a transformation of consciousness of the *nāyaṇmār* which makes one engage in service so as to transform the ordinary mode of existence into an extraordinary living in *Śiva*. The total spontaneity of *Śiva* dance can be an enormously powerful and attractive image of what *Śiva* is like-and, by extension, of what it must be like to be possessed by, saved by, transformed by, such a God i.e. *Śiva*: for the *nāyaṇmār* and *Cēkkiḷār* to be in *Śiva* is to be in his service.

CHAPTER SIX

THE GOAL OF *NĀYAṆMĀR*'S LIFE IN THE *PERIYA PURĀṆAM*

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the goal of the *nāyaṇmār* as presented in the *Periya Purāṇam* i.e. the ultimate goal of their existence. The goal of life for *nāyaṇmār* is to get rid of, wash away or to cleanse i.e. to free them from the clutches of taints or impurities (மாசு: *māsu*, மலம்: *malam*)⁴⁹² that obscure the innate purity of their self (PP. 4201)⁴⁹³ and prevent one from embracing the feet of the *Śiva* (PP. 3995)⁴⁹⁴. As a result, as a noteworthy aspect of his emphasis on devotion manifested in *nāyaṇmār*'s service and moral living, *Cēkkiḷār* draws attention to 'three impurities' (மும்மலம்: *mummalam*) (PP. 238)⁴⁹⁵ that stands as greater hindrances to the realization of *Śiva*. Aside from this

⁴⁹² The word *māsu* (மாசு) in Tamil has many meanings apart from the sense in which it is used primarily by *Cēkkiḷār* i.e. stain, taint, tarnish (அழுக்கு: *aḷukku*). The word also communicates meanings such as (i) spot (மறு:அயசு), (iii) defect, fault, flaw (குற்றம்: *kuṭram*) (iv) blackness (கருமை: *karumai*) (v) darkness (இருள்: *irul*) (vi) cloud (மேகம்: *meham*), (vii) cord of a net (வலை வடம்: *valai vadam*) in Tamil. *Cēkkiḷār* also uses frequently the word *malam* (மலம்) to convey the idea of taint.

⁴⁹³ 'கற்றை வேணி முடியார்தம் கழல்சேர்வதற்குக் கலந்தவினை செற்றநேசர் கழல்வணங்கிச்...' (பெ.பு. 4201).

'We have worshipped the feet of *Nēcar* who to reach that goal severed the bondage of besetting deeds...' (PP. 4201).

⁴⁹⁴ 'இவ்வகையே திருத்தொண்டின் அருமை நெறி எந்நாளும் செவ்விய அன்பினில் ஆற்றித் திருந்திய சிந்தையர் ஆகிப் ... பாதமலர் நிழல் சேர்ந்து மெய்வகைய வழிஅன்பின் மீளாத நிலைபெற்றார்' (பெ.பு. 3995).

'Thus day by day the prince followed the path of service, with a pure heart and flawless love. So by his genuine devotion he attained the shade of *Śiva*'s feet that state from which there is no return' (PP. 3995).

⁴⁹⁵ '...தண்மருங்கு தொழுவார்கள்தம் மும்மை மாமலங்கள் அறவீடு அருள் தில்லை' (பெ.பு. 238).

'Those who worship here are freed from the three defilements and granted entry into heaven ...' (PP. 238). The three defilements – the three bonds which separate the soul (*pasu*: பசு) from God (*pati*: பதி) and entail rebirth; they are *āṇavam* (ஆணவம்) (A sense of 'I' ness, ego-centeredness), *karmam* or *viṇai* (வினை) (deeds good and evil and their fruit) and *māyai* (மாயை) (entrapment in the material world). They were later systematized in the *Siddhanta* philosophy. These three defilements or bonds are delusive in essence and character. These impurities produce false enjoyment and lead the souls (*pasu*: பசு) towards bondage (பந்தம்: *pañtam*). Among them, '*āṇavam*' (ஆணவம்) is the natural 'taint' that affects the soul and promotes a false sense. It blocks the unlimited intelligence of the soul. As a result, the soul is driven to a state of imperfection and '*āṇavam*' causes detrimental effects to the soul. As long as the human soul develops a sense of pride and resorts to unfair means to achieve its unethical ends, rarely can the soul attain emancipation. Under the influence of '*āṇavam*' (ஆணவம்), however, the thoughts, words, and deeds of the

paramount need for the washing away of ‘taints’ (மாசு: *māsu*), there is ‘positive’ good to be gained from consorting with other devotees of *Śiva* as exemplified in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 4046)⁴⁹⁶. Those who have overcome the impurities, hence not caught in the current of self-centred predicaments praise *Śiva* and His devotees; they are the people of pre-eminence (PP. 4154)⁴⁹⁷. *Cēkṇilār* relates that the *nāyaṇmār* performed conducts that ranged from simple chanting of the Five-Letter-Formula (PP. 4199)⁴⁹⁸, from incessant mental prayer to feeding the devotees of God unceasingly in days of plenty and in days of poverty (PP. 4071)⁴⁹⁹, from having the honour of being the parent of a devotee to the laying down one’s life rather than harm a devotee (PP. 4233)⁵⁰⁰. This chapter investigates, first the goal of *nāyaṇmār*’s existence as presented by *Cēkṇilār*, and

souls are also corrupted. *Viani* (வினை) is all these three. Insofar as thoughts, words, and deeds arise from a false sense of “I” and “mine,” they become an impurity or bond. *Māyai* (மாயை) is the primordial stuff or matter out of which all worlds, physical objects, and the sensory and internal faculties of souls are made. These are meant for giving some enlightenment to souls, partially redeeming them from the darkness of ignorance. But here again, under the influence of ‘*āṇavam*’ (ஆணவம்), these products are used for one’s selfish enjoyment and they thus become a bond. In brief, ‘*āṇavam*’ in its nominative aspect prompts a wrong sense of “I” and thus makes *vinai* an impurity or bond; ‘*āṇavam*’ in its possessive aspect, by making the soul claim the fruits of its *vinai* and all objects of enjoyment exclusively for itself, also makes *māyai* an impurity of bond. *Vinai*, the twin deeds of good and evil, birth after birth, actually helps the soul in its struggle to gain freedom from the bonds of the cycle of deaths and rebirths. See. Devasenapathi, 1997, p. 90-93. It must be pointed out here that *Cēkṇilār* does not explicitly mentions or names the three impurities. He only refers to them collectively as three impurities.

⁴⁹⁶ ‘அத்தர் ஆகிய அங்கணர் அன்பரை இத்தலத்தில் இகழ்ந்து இயம்பும் உரை
ஐவத்த நாவை வலித்து ...’ (பெ.பு. 4046)

‘We have paid homage to the feet of *Cattiyār*, who cut the tongues of those who spoke ill of the servants of the Lord ...’ (PP. 4046).

⁴⁹⁷ ‘அம்கண்ணை அடியாரை ஆராத காதலினால் பொங்கிவரும் உவகையுடன் தாம்விரும்பிப்
பூசிப்பா...’ (பெ.பு. 4154).

‘with unwearying love and joy they delight in worshipping *Śiva* and His servants...’ (PP. 4154).

⁴⁹⁸ For example, *Cēkṇilār* presents *Nēca nāyaṇār* as one who dedicated his thoughts to flower feet of Haran, his words to the Five-Letter formula and his works to the servant of the Lord.

‘ஆங்கவர் மனத்தின்செய்கை அரனடிப்போதுக்குஆக்கி ஓங்கிய வாக்கின் செய்கை உயர்ந்த
அஞ்செழுத்துக்கு ஆக்கி தாங்கு கைத்தொழிலின் செய்கை தம்பிரான் அடியார்க்கு...’ (பெ.பு. 4199).

⁴⁹⁹ *Cēkṇilār* presents as one who by his kindly words, gave pleasure to all, and was more generous in his donations to the servants of *Śiva*.

‘யாவார்க்கும் மனம் உவக்கும் இன்பமொழிப் பயன் இயம்பித் தேவர்க்கு முதல்தேவர்
சீர்அடியார் எல்லார்க்கும் மேவுஉற்ற இருநிதியம் மிகஅளித்து...’ (பெ.பு. 4071).

⁵⁰⁰ Praise of *Icāñṇiyār* the mother of Nampi, the servant of *Śiva*.

‘...ஆண்டநம்பி தனைப் பயந்தார் இழியாக்குலத்தின் இசைஞானிப் பிராட்டியாரைப்
என்சிறுபுன்...’ (பெ.பு. 4233).

secondly it affirms that for *Cēkḱilār* the goal of the *nāyaṇmār* is to gain release from encumbrances of the impurities and to be a servant to the servant of the *Śiva* (PP. 345)⁵⁰¹.

This chapter explores the following concerns.

6.2. The Goal of Life of the *Nāyaṇmār*.

6.3. Various Means to Release.

6.4. Consorting with Other Devotees: The *Nāyaṇmār* as Servant of the Servants of the Lord.

6.5 Summary

6.2 The Goal of Life of the *Nāyaṇmār*

In the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkḱilār* eulogizes the Tamil spiritual leaders i.e. *nāyaṇmār* who have unilaterally considered *Śiva* as their master and themselves as slaves (PP. 4162)⁵⁰².

At the same time *Cēkḱilār* extols that this ‘sages have gained release from the three eternal impurities and abide by the moral duties of their caste’ (PP.4173)⁵⁰³. Elsewhere

Cēkḱilār points out that ‘it is the feet of *Śiva* that are the source of bondage and release’ (PP. 300)⁵⁰⁴. The goal of *nāyaṇmār* or their ardent desire is to ‘attain bliss in the shadow

of the Lord’s feet’ (PP. 1034)⁵⁰⁵ which would ‘release them from all impurities that

thwarts the vision of seeing and serving *Śiva*’ (PP. 238)⁵⁰⁶. ‘Even if the whole created

⁵⁰¹ ‘...தில்லைவாழ் அந்தணர்தம் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்’ (பெ.பு. 345).

⁵⁰² ‘... பூரணமெய்ப் பரஞ்சோதி பொலிந்து இலங்கு நாதாந்தத் தாரணையால் சிவத்து அடைந்து சித்தத்தார் தனிமன்றுள் ஆரணகா ரணக்கூத்தர் அடித் தொண்டின் வழி அடைந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 4162).

‘...they have set their hearts on *Śiva*. These are they who by their service have attained the feet of the Lord, the author of the Vedas, who dances in the sacred court’ (PP. 4162).

⁵⁰³ ‘...ஆதிவரும் மும்மலமும் அறுத்த வாய்மை அருமுனிவர் முழுவதும் மெய்அணிவர் அன்றே’ (பெ.பு. 4173)

⁵⁰⁴ ‘பந்தம் வீடுத ரும்பர மன்கழல் சிந்தை ஆரவம் உன்னும் என்சிந்தையே...’ (பெ.பு. 300).

⁵⁰⁵ ‘தங்கள் பெருமான் அடி நீழல் தலையாம் நிலைமை சார்வுற்றார்’ (பெ.பு. 1034).

⁵⁰⁶ ‘...தண்மருங்கு தொழுவார்கள்தம் மும்மை மாமலங்கள் அறவீடு அருள் தில்லை’ (பெ.பு. 238).

order falls into chaos, these devotees will never forget the flower feet of him. They will stand fast in the path of love, rock-like in virtue!’ (PP. 142)⁵⁰⁷. In another instant

Cēkkiḷār recounts:

‘Just as he spent his time washing the dust and dirt out of the clothes of the devotees of the Lord, he attempted to expunge the taint of former deeds and the three impurities which lead to repeated births’ (PP. 1196)⁵⁰⁸.

What should be noted here in these verses is the reference to *nāyaṇmār* as ones who attempted to ‘expunge the taint of former deeds and the three impurities which leads to repeated births’ (PP. 1196)⁵⁰⁹ in order to embrace the feet of *Śiva*. Here the words the ‘taint’ (மாசு: *māsu*) meaning ‘stains’ or ‘spots’ of ‘deeds’ (வினை: *viani*) and the ‘three impurities’ (*mallam mūndrum*: மலம் மூன்றும்) which is also referred to by *Cēkkiḷār* as eternal (ஆதிவரும் :*āivarum*) (PP. 4173)⁵¹⁰ is spoken as *ṭollai* (தொல்லை) literally meaning ‘troublesome’ or ‘obstruction’ which are delusive in character and essence and leads one to perform ‘two-fold deeds’ (இருவினைகள்: *iru-viṇai*) (PP. 4168)⁵¹¹ of good and evil and entail repeated births (பெரும் பிறவி: *perum piravi*). Though *Cēkkiḷār* does not explicitly mentions or names the three impurities⁵¹², as stated in the verse, it is these impurities which produce false enjoyments and leads one towards bondage (பந்தம்: *paṇṭam*) and create the capacity for experience and repeated births (பெரும் பிறவி: *perum piravi*).

⁵⁰⁷ ‘பூதம் ஐந்தும் நிலையில் கலங்கினும் மாது ஓர்பாகர் மலர்த்தாள் மறப்பு இலார் ஒதுகாதல் ஊறைப்பின் நெறி நின்றார் கோதுஇலாத குணப்பொருங்குன்று அனார்’ (பெ.பு. 142).

⁵⁰⁸ ‘தேச உடைய மலர்க்கமலச் சேவடியார் அடியார்தம் தூசு உடைய துகள்மாசு கழிப்பார் போல் தொல்லை வினை ஆசு உடைய மலம் மூன்றும் அணைய வரும் பெரும் பிறவி மாசு தனை விடக் கழித்து வரும் நாளில் அங்கு ஒரு நாள்’ (பெ.பு. 1196).

⁵⁰⁹ ‘மலம் மூன்றும் அணைய வரும் பெரும் பிறவி மாசு தனை விடக் கழித்து’ (பெ.பு. 1196).

⁵¹⁰ ‘...ஆதிவரும் மும்மலமும்...’ (பெ.பு. 4173)

⁵¹¹ ‘...மொழிவதுநம் இருவினைகள் கழிவதுஆக’ (பெ.பு. 4168).

⁵¹² For the description of the three impurities, see p. 00

Here, the word *viṇai* (வினை) etymologically means ‘action’. The words ‘two-fold deeds’ [இருவினைகள்: *iru-viṇai* (PP. 4168)⁵¹³ or *irumai viṇaikkum oruvadivam*’ : இருமை வினைக்கும் ஒருவடிவாம் (PP. 1220)]⁵¹⁴ referred implies the fruits of acts as good and bad, and ‘*oruvadivam*’ (ஒருவடிவாம்) signifies the equipoise of mind to take the fruits of and good deeds, alike. The ‘two-fold deeds’ of good and bad (இருவினைகள்: *iru-viṇai*) as *Cēkḱilār* notes ‘like a snake that can produce rare jewels or deadly poison; *Eccatattan* was capable of deeds of good and ill’ (PP. 1220)⁵¹⁵. *Cēkḱilār* points out that the sense organs prevent the one from proceeding towards the spiritual path, while one is already suffering and oscillating in the net of ‘two-fold deeds’ (இருவினைகள்: *iru-viṇai*).

According to *Cēkḱilār* the acts of good and bad in one are like the precious stone as well as the poison of a snake respectively (PP. 734. 1215)⁵¹⁶. Actions, either good or bad along with their results, lead one towards ‘bondage’ (*paṇṭam*: பந்தம்). Good acts produce merits and subsequently pleasures, while the evil acts demerits and suffering. Till the fruits of these acts are exhausted there would be births, the best way to reduce the residual impression of the past births is to attain the permanent bliss by performing service to *Śiva*. *Cēkḱilār* recalls that *Iyarpakaiyār*, in every respect, was for to attain release (*vīṭu*: வீடு) but this tiny bit of attachment to his wife stood in his way. *Śiva*

⁵¹³ ‘...மொழிவதுநம் இருவினைகள் கழிவதுஆக’ (பெ.பு. 4168).

⁵¹⁴ ‘...அருமை மணியும் அளித்து அதுவே நஞ்சும் அளிக்கும் அரவு போல் இருமை வினைக்கும் ஒருவடிவாம் எச்சத்ததன் உளன் ஆனான்’ (பெ.பு. 1220).

⁵¹⁵ ‘...அருமை மணியும் அளித்து அதுவே நஞ்சும் அளிக்கும் அரவு போல் இருமை வினைக்கும் ஒருவடிவாம் எச்சத்ததன் உளன் ஆனான்’ (பெ.பு. 1220).

⁵¹⁶ ‘பலதுறைகளின் வெருவரலொடு பயில்வலை அறநுழைமா உலமொடு படர்வன தகைஉற உறுசின மொடுகவர்நாய் நிலவிய இருவினைவலியிடை நிலை சுழல்பவர் நெறிசேர் புலன் உறுமனன் இடைதடை செய்த பொறிகளின் அளவு உளவே’ (பெ.பு. 734).

wanted to cleanse the *nāyaṇār* of the small stain (மலம்: *malam*) which stood in the way of his gaining release (PP. 404-439)⁵¹⁷.

It also must be pointed out that the notion of ‘*irumai viṇaikkum oruvadivam*’ (இருமை வினைக்கும் ஒருவடிவம்) (PP. 1220)⁵¹⁸ involves the three phases of time; past, present, and future. In the present life the aspirant has to experience the result or the fruits of his past deeds (முன்வினைப் பயன்: *munviṇaippayan*) so that he can prevent the future births. She (*Tilakavati*: திலகவதி) prayed, *Cēkkiḷār* notes, ‘as the result of the past misdeeds, my brother has fallen into the trap of a false religion’ (PP. 1316)⁵¹⁹. The Lord replied ‘in a previous birth your brother was a hermit performed penances enough to gain my feet’ (PP. 1318)⁵²⁰. Hence, the notion of rebirth (பெரும்பிறவி: *perumpiravi*) is linked with the notion of *viṇai* (வினை), for *Cēkkiḷār* one cannot think of the one without the other. It is the firm understanding that the present behavioral patterns of an individual are the reflection of the deeds of previous birth.

It is for this reason *Cēkkiḷār* while recounting the story of each *nāyaṇmār* describes austerities, heritage, and penances of the *nāyaṇmār* in their previous births. While narrating the life of *Tirunāvukkaracar*, *Cēkkiḷār* notes that the *nāyaṇār* was proceeding towards *Tillai*, he saw the cuckoos addressing each other: ‘Forsake the way that leads hated rebirth! Deeds both good and bad enchain you. Break your bonds and

⁵¹⁷ For the story of the life of *Iyarpakaiyār nāyaṇār*, see p. 238.

⁵¹⁸ ‘...அருமை மணியும் அளித்து அதுவே நஞ்சும் அளிக்கும் அரவு போல் இருமை வினைக்கும் ஒருவடிவம் எச்சத்ததன் உளன் ஆனான்’ (பெ.பு. 1220).

⁵¹⁹ ‘... ஒளியைத் தொழுது ... ஈண்டு வினைப் பரசமயக் குழிநின்று’ (பெ.பு. 1316).

⁵²⁰ ‘... முன்னமே முனியாகி எனை அடையத் தவம் முயன்றான் அன்னவனை இனிச்சூலை மடுத்து ஆள்வம்...’ (பெ.பு. 1318).

draw near!’ (PP. 1429)⁵²¹ i.e. one should go to *Tillai* to get rid of the enmity caused by births (பிறவிப்பகைநெறி: *piravippakaineri*) to diminish the increasing two-fold activity (இருவினை பெருகித்: *iruvinaṭai perukithe*) and to reduce the bonds. The *nāyaṇmār* had as their objective in life to dismiss or ‘expunge the taint of former deeds and the three impurities which lead to repeated births’ (PP. 1196)⁵²² and enjoy the bliss derived from the submission to the feet of *Śiva* (PP. 1034)⁵²³.

Remarkably, *Cēkkiḷār* brings forth in the *Cākkiya nāyaṇār*⁵²⁴ *purāṇam* an aspect of *Śiva* which is interesting. *Cēkkiḷār* points out that ‘the act, the agent, the fruit of action and the one who binds the fruits of action to the agent: he learnt that these four basic elements constitute reality, and that no other religion but *Śaivism* held this teaching. By virtue of the penances which he performed, this devotee was enlightened by the grace (*aruḷ*) of *Śiva* and came to see *Śiva* as Supreme’ (PP. 3645)⁵²⁵. Therefore, the real object to be realized on earth is *Śiva* and the *nāyaṇār* realized this truth by *Śiva*’s *aruḷ* (grace). Therefore, the bondage and release are caused by *Śiva* Himself and it is His *aruḷ* (grace) which enabled the *nāyaṇmār* to cast off their impurities and attain the feet of the Lord.

Śiva annihilates the impediments and makes the *nāyaṇmār* shine in their pristine purity. *Śiva* directs the impurities to His benevolence to the *nāyaṇmār* during the

⁵²¹ ‘...பிறவிப்பகைநெறி விடுவீர் இருவினை பெருகித் தொடர்பிணி உறுபாசம் பறிவுற்றிட அணையுமின் என்று இருபுடை பயில் சூழ்சினை மிசை குயில்...’ (பெ.பு. 1429).

⁵²² ‘தேச உடைய மலர்க்கமலச் சேவடியார் அடியார்தம் தூசு உடைய துகள்மாசு கழிப்பார் போல் தொல்லை வினை ஆசு உடைய மலம் மூன்றும் அணைய வரும் பெரும் பிறவி மாசு தனை விடக் கழித்து வரும் நாளில் அங்கு ஒரு நாள்’ (பெ.பு. 1196).

⁵²³ ‘தங்கள் பெருமான் அடி நீழல் தலையாம் நிலைமை சார்வுற்றார்’ (பெ.பு. 1034).

⁵²⁴ For the life of story of this *nāyaṇār*, see p. 70

⁵²⁵ ‘செய்வினையும் செய்வானும் அதன் பயனும் கொடுப்பானும் மெய்வகையால் நான்கு ஆகும் விதித்த பொருள் எனக்கொண்ட இவ்இயல்பு சைவநெறி அல்லவற்றுக்கு இல்லை என உய்வகையால் பொருள் சிவன் என்று அருளாலே உணர்ந்து அறிந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 3645).

stage of their bondage. Hence, *Cēkkiḷār* assert that the medicine offered by *Śiva* alone can cure the disease of birth: ‘He is both medicine and mantra’ (PP. 2198)⁵²⁶ and ‘for those who in their present birth meditate on him as the one true shining light, he dispels the darkness of falsehood and of actions, good and bad’ (PP. 2733)⁵²⁷. *Tirunāvukkaracar* did not succumb to the tortures of the king, since he was resolute that *Śiva* was there to offer the appropriate effects, and rescue him (PP. 2601-2671). *Cēkkiḷār* speaks of the evils of deeds or *viṇai* (வினை) and *Śiva*’s justification of eradicating them. He maintains that the foremost duty of *Śiva* is to annihilate the influence of *viṇai* (வினை) of those who surrender to His holy Feet (PP. 1034)⁵²⁸.

It should be noted, *Cēkkiḷār*, after invocatory verses, describes ‘the greatness of the holy mountain’ (‘திருமலைச்சிறப்பு’ : *tirumalaicciṇapu*) i.e. Sacred-Hill of *Śiva* (PP.11-50), ‘the greatness of the holy land’ (‘திருநாட்டுச்சிறப்பு’ : *tirunāṭṭuccirapu*) i.e. *Cōḷa*-country (PP. 51-85) and ‘the glory of the holy city’ (‘திருநகரச்சிறப்பு’ : *tirunakaraccirapu*) i.e. *Tiruvārur* in succession. *Cēkkiḷār* uses the prefix ‘*Tiru*’ (திரு) or ‘Holy’ before the three places, notably, hill, country, and city – to indicate the admirable nature of these three places. While explaining the beauty of these places, *Cēkkiḷār* infuses religious fervor in every verse that the earth is the sacred place where in one can realize oneself. For example while singing the greatness of the city *Cēkkiḷār* notes ‘...it is the dwelling place of the Lord’ (PP. 86)⁵²⁹.

⁵²⁶ ‘...மருந்தொடு மந்திரம்...’ (பெ.பு. 2198).

⁵²⁷ ‘தம்மையே சிந்தியா எனும் தன்மைதான் மெய்ம்மை ஆகிவிளங்கு ஒளிதாம் என இம்மையே நினைவார்தம் இருவினைப் பொய்ம்மைவல் இருள் போக்குவர் என்றதாம்’ (பெ.பு. 2733).

⁵²⁸ ‘தங்கள் பெருமான் அடி நீழல் தலையாம் நிலைமை சார்வுற்றார்’ (பெ.பு. 1034).

⁵²⁹ ‘சொன்ன நாட்டிடைத் தொன்மையில் மிக்கது மன்னும் மாமலரான் வழிபட்டது வன்னி ஆறு மத்பொதி செஞ்சடைச் சென்னியார் திருவாரூர்த் திருநகர்’ (பெ.பு. 86).

What should be pointed is that all the constituent elements of the earth have been sanctified by the *Cēkkiḷār* so as to make the readers feel the thrill of divinity at every verse. This view makes clear that the world has been created by *Śiva* out of his abundant love towards the imperfect *nāyaṇmār* to provide them an opportunity to think, speak and act in terms of *Śiva*, to cleanse the stains of impurities or the impressions of binding *viṇai* (வினை) and become perfect. The benevolence of *Śiva* has brought the suffering selves of the *nāyaṇmār* into light from the darkness. *Cēkkiḷār* points to this when he notes that the *nāyaṇār* sang:

‘O Lord, you say I am to leave your fair golden feet and become subject to delusion in a human body. Then, Lord, when I lose my senses, worthless as I am, in grace make me your own’ (PP. 38)⁵³⁰.

Therefore, the foremost duty of *Śiva* is annihilate the influence of actions of good and bad of the *nāyaṇmār* who surrender to the feet of Him. As presented in this verse, it also must be noted, that the human body is the instrument of knowledge, and that the world of enjoyment are created not to make the *nāyaṇmār* go astray but to perpetuate them in the right spirit and strive for release. The life histories of the *nāyaṇmār* show the impoverished condition of their life under the empirical circumstances like, family, clan, profession, etc., and also their hectic efforts to vanquish such ensnaring impurities that attaches to their self. As soon as the impediments which hitherto were tantalizing them fade away, the *nāyaṇmār* shine in effulgence and enter into a state of unalloyed bliss (PP. 1020)⁵³¹.

⁵³⁰ ‘கைகள் அஞ்சலி கூப்பிக் கலங்கினான் செய்ய சேவடி நீங்கும் சிறுமையேன் ஐமயல் மானுடமாய் மயங்கும் வழி ஐயனே தடுத்து ஆண்டு அருள்செய்என’ (பெ.பு. 38).

⁵³¹ ‘...பேதம் புரியாஅருள் பேர் அரசு ஆளப்பெற்று நாதன் கழல் சேவடி நண்ணினர் அண்ணலாரே’ (பெ.பு. 1020).

‘...Finally he attained the feet of the Lord, and received the special boon of ruling in the spiritual realm above’ (PP. 1020).

The moment the *nāyaṇmār* become recipients of *Śiva's aruḷ* (grace) and wash away all the 'taints of deeds', they wish that everyone to enjoy the fruits of religious life like themselves. *Cēkkiḷār* describes the laudable venture of *Cambandar* in offering release to the entire human-folk who have gathered to witness his wedding proceedings. *Cēkkiḷār* notes that the *nāyaṇār* recited the Five-Letter-Prayer as the true path of wisdom to everyone and made an appeal to the gathering: 'everyone should enter into the effulgent light so as to cast off the evils of birth' (PP. 3151)⁵³². The *nāyaṇār's* close associates, his parents, relatives, and other entered into the huge effulgent light sent by *Śiva* so escaped the cycle of rebirth. The ascetics, devotees and sages who chanted the Vedas, those had come to worship and other whom *aruḷ* (grace) has brought to that place that they might win release; all entered the infinite pillar of light (PP. 3155)⁵³³. *Cambandar* with his newly wedded spouse had made a around the beauteous light and entered. He entered the light; he became the very embodiment of wisdom and became 'one with the Lord' ('ஒன்றிஉடன் ஆனார்': *onri'utaṇ āṇār*) (PP. 3156)⁵³⁴. The lives of *Tirunāvukkaracar*, *Campantar* and others who had been bestowed with *aruḷ* (grace) are highly remarkable in the sense that till they attained the final released they served the people (PP. 2214-2230), imparted divine message (PP. 2282-2287), eradicated evils (PP. 2231-2240), poverty (PP. 2325-2347), famine (PP. 1510 - 1527) etc.; curtailed the belligerent nature of other religious cults, and above all showed the pathway to perfection to the entire humanity through life of devotion manifested in service and moral living.

⁵³² '...இம்மணத்தில் வந்தோர் ஈனம் ஆம் பிறவி தீர் யாவரும் புகுக என்ன' (பெ.பு. 3151).

⁵³³ 'ஆறுவகைச் சமயத்தில் அருந்தவரும் அடியவரும் கூறுமறை முனிவர்களும் கும்பிடவந்து ஆணைந்தாரும் வேறுதிரு அருளினால் வீடுபெற வந்தாரும் ஈறுஇல் பெருஞ்சோதியின் உள்எல்லாரும் புக்க தன்பின்' (பெ.பு. 3155).

⁵³⁴ '...நாதன் வளர் எழில் சோதி நண்ணி அதன் உள்புகுவார் போதநிலை முடித்தவழிப் புக்கு ஒன்றிஉடன் ஆனார்' (பெ.பு. 3156).

The release of one from these impurities also implies union with *Śiva*. They *nāyamṇār* ‘became one with *Śiva*’ (‘ஒன்றிஉடன் ஆனார்’ : *onri’uṭaṇ āṇār*) (PP. 3156)⁵³⁵, attuning to the nature of *Śiva* (PP. 1697)⁵³⁶. Such a ‘unitive’ experience will annihilate the bonds of the life and the *nāyamṇār* attain the *aruḷ* (grace) of endlessly serving the *Śiva* in the eternal abode. They attain equanimity, i.e. they begin to perceive the good and bad alike. *Cēkkiḷār* poignantly refers to this as ‘*irumai viṇaikkum oruvadivam*’ (இருமை வினைக்கும் ஒருவடிவாம்) (PP. 1220)⁵³⁷; ‘*oruvadivam*’ (ஒருவடிவாம்) signifies the equipoise of mind to take the fruits of and good deeds, alike. At this stage, the *nāyamṇār* simply invoke the presence of *Śiva* and perform deeds in a disinterested manner. When the equipoise between the good and activities arises, there prevails neither fascination by the worldly charms or dejection by worldly misfortunes. The *nāyamṇār* shall not experience the fruit of their actions, since they have performed them in the states of ‘Servants of *Śiva*’ (*tiruṭṇar*: திருத்தொண்டர்). When the qualities like pleasure and pain, and delight and harm, like and dislikes have been stabilized, the individual is one freed from attractive of self-oriented activities. There arises, then, an equilibrium of acts and the *nāyamṇār* came to feel that they are not the agent of actions and the thoughts of self-assertion gradually wither away. *Cēkkiḷār* narrates *Tirukkurppuṭṇar* did the service of washing the clothes of devotees which cleansed the blemishes of the two-fold activity, mitigated the force of the impurities and stopped the sources of rebirth (PP. 1196)⁵³⁸.

⁵³⁵ ‘...நாதன் வளர் எழில் சோதி நண்ணி அதன் உள்புகுவார் போதநிலை முடித்தவழிப் புக்கு ஒன்றிஉடன் ஆனார்’ (பெ.பு. 3156).

⁵³⁶ ‘மண்முதலாம் உலகுஏத்த மன்னுதிருத்தாண்டகத்தைப் புண்ணியா உன் அடிக்கே போகின்றேன் எனப் புகன்று நண்அரிய சிவானந்த ஞானவடிவே ஆகி அண்ணலார் ஆண்ட அரசு அமர்ந்திருந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 1697).

⁵³⁷ ‘...அருமை மணியும் அளித்து அதுவே நஞ்சும் அளிக்கும் அரவு போல் இருமை வினைக்கும் ஒருவடிவாம் எச்சத்ததன் உளன் ஆனான்’ (பெ.பு. 1220).

⁵³⁸ ‘தேச உடைய மலர்க்கமலச் சேவடியார் அடியார்தம் தூசு உடைய துகள்மாக கழிப்பார் போல் தொல்லை வினை ஆசு உடைய மலம் மூன்றும் அணைய வரும்

Throughout his work, *Cēkkiḷār* successfully elucidates the means by which the *nāyamṇār* annihilated the forces of their impurities and prepared them to imbibe the benevolence of *Śiva*.

The *nāyamṇār* turn their attention towards *Śiva*, fostering a great reverence, thereby gaining true knowledge. Therefore, the change that is initiated by *Śiva*, infuses an ontological change in the ‘objective’ nature or state of the *nāyamṇār*. This release, therefore, is not a negative liberation of the individual from bondage. Rather, the *nāyamṇār* is radically changed from all that entangles them, to a positive state of existence of the self in the *Śiva*-realms; this is the enlightening bliss of serving the Lord. *Śiva* captures the *nāyamṇār* with his *aruḷ* (grace) from the forces of impurities that impede their human existence. The *nāyamṇār* invariably acknowledges that they had been enslaved by *Śiva* (PP. 225)⁵³⁹. *Cuntarar* was rescued by *Śiva* himself in the former’s wedding hall when he was about to be caught in the maladies of family life. *Śiva* appeared in the guise of an old sage and teased the *nāyamṇār* and finally revealed his identity. Thus if one relinquishes attachment and leads a life of detachment, release becomes imminent. Towards the end of every narration of the life story of the *nāyamṇār*, *Cēkkiḷār* says that the *nāyamṇār* had either reached the golden feet of the *Śiva* or became the chief attendant of Him at *Kailās* (PP. 970, 1020)⁵⁴⁰.

பெரும் பிறவி மாசு தனை விடக் கழித்து வரும் நாளில் அங்கு ஒரு நாள்’ (பெ.பு. 1196).
‘Just as he spent his time washing the dust and dirt out of the clothes of the devotees of the Lord, he attempted to expunge the taint of former deeds and the three impurities which lead to repeated births’ (PP. 1196).

⁵³⁹ ‘... தடுத்து ஆண்டாய் அடியேற்குத்...’ (பெ.பு. 225).

‘... You have made me as your own...’ (PP. 225)

⁵⁴⁰ ‘...இந்நின்ற நிலையே நம்பால் அணைவாய் என அவரும் அந்நின்ற நிலைபெயர்ப்பார்...’
(பெ.பு. 970).

‘...the Lord then said “Come just as you are, and live with us”...’ (PP. 970).

Cēkḱilār also explains the state of *nāyaṇār* who had realized the feet of *Śiva*. He narrates the *nāyaṇār* was serving *Śiva* by way removing the waste materials inside the precincts of the temple, *Śiva* tested him by placing valuable stones. The *nāyaṇār* did not discriminate among grass, stone, gold, pearls and dwindled not in his utterance and hence he threw them in the pond. The divine damsels intended metrically to meddle with his mystical state of unified consciousness, but in vain. As the *nāyaṇār* was immersed in the feet of *Śiva* with inseparable thought, glowing love and austere nature, he stood firm in his service with divine illumination and with undivided consciousness. He made an earnest appeal to *Śiva* through his mellifluous hymns to keep him under his feet, since he had submitted everything to him (PP. 1686-703). At the end of the narration *Cēkḱilār* points out that:

‘*Tirunāvukkaracar* was transformed into the likeness of *Śiva*’s joy and wisdom, the ultimate attainment, and he reposed beneath the feet of the great God’ (PP. 1697)⁵⁴¹.

Here the *nāyaṇār* is presented as one enjoyed exclusively *Śiva*’s joy and wisdom (‘சிவானந்த ஞானவடிவே’: *Śivāṇanta ṇāṇavaṭivē*). So the *nāyaṇār* had attained the very gracious form of *Śiva* i.e. *Śivananda* (‘சிவானந்த’ : *Śivāṇanta*) or *Śiva*-bliss: sublimely blissful experience of *Śiva*. Hence, the *nāyaṇār* is presented as one who fully lives *Śiva*; someone who has gained *Śiva*, firmly assimilated knowledge of the self and is released from all the entails them while living in a human body, free from rebirth. The same view

In another occasion *Cēkḱilār* recounts:

‘பாதம் பரமன்னவர் சூழ்ந்து பணிந்து போற்ற ஏதம்பிணி யாவகை இவ்
உலகு ஆண்டு தொண்டின் பேதம் புரியாஅருள் பேர் அரசு ஆளப்பெற்று
நாதன் கழல் சேவடி நண்ணினர் அண்ணலாரே’ (பெ.பு. 1020).

‘...Finally he attained the feet of the Lord, and received the special boon of ruling in the spiritual realm above’ (PP. 1020).

⁵⁴¹ “மண்முதலாம் உலகுஏத்த மன்னுதிருக்காண்டகத்தைப் புண்ணியா உன் அடிக்கே போகின்றேன்
எனப் புகன்று நண்அரிய சிவானந்த ஞானவடிவே ஆகி அண்ணலார் ஆண்ட அரசு
அமர்ந்திருந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 1697).

had been held by *Cēkkiḷār* in the life account of the *Murukar nāyaṇār* (PP. 1022-1035)⁵⁴², *Tirunāḷaiippoōvār* (PP. 1046-1077)⁵⁴³ and *Āṇāyar nāyaṇār Purāṇam* (PP. 931-972)⁵⁴⁴.

Hence, all those who bow before *Śiva* as sincere devotees will enjoy the fruits of their deed devoid of distress, since they perform austerities as devout ‘persons’ of *Śiva*.

6.3 The Pathways to Release: Various Means of Release followed by the *Nāyaṇmār*

The unshakable conviction in the efficacy of *Śiva* cutting the root of action that leads to bondage, the *nāyaṇmār* also simply invoked the blessings of *Śiva* and performed the deeds of service. They declared that even the very name of *Śiva* when chanted is sufficient to subdue the *viṇai* (வினை) i.e. action good and bad. Hence, as a necessary source of inspiration, chanting the Five-letter-Prayer became part and parcel of every aspect of the *nāyaṇmār* life. While describing the birth place of *Caṇṭēcurar*, *Cēkkiḷār*, beautifully narrated it with divine fervor and religious inspiration thus: ‘the end product

⁵⁴² This *nāyaṇār* was aware that loyalty to the holy ash of the primal Lord was indeed true riches. Accordingly he invariably followed the customs of not taking food himself until he had prepared food for the devotee of the Lord and seen them eat. As from day to day he took pleasure in performing loving service of this kind, with the number of devotees that flocked to his door, all his inherited wealth was soon exhausted. He sold his slaves, his land and all that he possessed in order to continue feeding the needy devotees, but still he was not satisfied. Eventually, when he could find no further resources in that town to carry on this service, he was himself reduced to poverty and dejection. This devotee had formerly learnt the art of gambling as a means of making money, by practicing of gambling, he was able to perform the service there which was his chief aim. The *nāyaṇār* would keep his conscience clear by not handling personally any of the gains which thus accrued. To keep the process free from taint, all his gains would go straight to the cooks. Then after all the devotees had eaten, he himself would eat with the last sitting so as to be above suspicion.

⁵⁴³ For the life of the devotee, see p. 13.

⁵⁴⁴ This *nāyaṇār* is an example for a person leading a very simple life reaching the highest state of *yōga* - getting released and becoming one with *Śiva* - just by the whole hearted love for God. The *nāyaṇār* worshipped the Lord with the music. He served only the Lord who dances with his words, body, mind and action. His love for the Lord flowed from his heart. He selected a bamboo which had all the superior qualities that are said in the scriptures and made a flute as per the rules. He played the Five Letter Prayer of the Lord on the flute. His love made him see *Śiva* in the world and stay with Him in bliss forever.

of music is melody; of milk, sweetness; of the eye, sight; of thought, the Five-Letter-Prayer; of the sky rain; of the Vedas, *Śaivism*' (PP. 1219)⁵⁴⁵.

The *nāyaṇār* rarely forget to recite the Five-Letter-Prayers. *Cēkkiḷār* often mentions with admiration about the reciting of the Five-Letter-Prayer by the *nāyaṇmār*. *Cēkkiḷār* praises *Campantar* as the one who pointed to the recital of the Five-Letter-Prayer as the path of true wisdom to all humankind (PP. 3151)⁵⁴⁶. *Campantar*, according to *Cēkkiḷār* is the one who explained the deep intricacies of the Five-Letter-Prayer as the source of all the original mantras (PP. 2169)⁵⁴⁷. *Cēkkiḷār* also praises *Campantar* as the one who realized the benefit of chanting the Five-Letter-Prayer i.e. the ultimate benefit of chanting is to attain release (PP. 1981)⁵⁴⁸.

In the narration of the life of *Cōmōci māraṇ*, *Cēkkiḷār* opines that the serious contemplation of the Five-Letter-Prayer by the *nāyaṇmār* as an obligatory duty is for the enlightenment of one's inner faculty; he was steadfast in the daily discipline of reciting *Śiva*'s Five-Letter-Prayer as the means of gaining insight (PP.3637)⁵⁴⁹. During the time of inner turmoil and mental restlessness, the recital of the Five-Letter-Prayer is believed to offer solace. In the pursuit of release, surrendering oneself to the feet of the Lord is the major device. Importantly in crucial circumstances the *nāyaṇmār* completely depend

⁵⁴⁵ 'பண்ணின் பயனாம் நல் இசையும், பாலில் பயனாம் இன் கவையும் கண்ணின் பயனாம் பெருகு ஒளியும் கருத்தின் பயனாம் எழுத்து அஞ்சும் விண்ணின் பயனாம் பொழிமழையும் வேதப் பயனாம் சைவமும் போல் மண்ணின் பயனாம் அப்பதியின்...' (பெ.பு. 1219).

⁵⁴⁶ 'ஞானமெய்ந்நெறிதான் யார்க்கும் நமச்சிவாயச் சொல்ஆம்...' (பெ.பு. 3151).

⁵⁴⁷ '...அந்தியின் உள்மந்திரம் அஞ்செழுத்துமே என்று அஞ்செழுத்தின் திருப்பதிகம் அருளிச் செய்தார்' (பெ.பு. 2169).

⁵⁴⁸ '...விழுவார்கள் அஞ்செழுத்தும் துதித்து உள்ந்தபடி விரித்தார்' (பெ.பு. 1981).

⁵⁴⁹ '...சித்தம் தெளியச் சிவன் அஞ்செழுத்து ஓதும் வாய்மை நித்தம் நியமம் எனப்போற்றும் நெறியில் நின்றார்' (பெ.பு. 3637).

upon *Śiva* to lead them by reciting the Five-Letter-Prayer. *Taṇṭi Aṭkal nāyaṇār* recited the Five-Letter-Prayer while cleansing the temple pond as divine service. He pronounced that he would gain vision to his blind eye if his service and submission were too acceptable to *Śiva* (PP. 3599)⁵⁵⁰. As ever, conscious of *Śiva* he had a dip in the pond chanting the Five-Letter prayer. *Pukaḷccōḷar* entered into a blazing fire by uttering the Five-Letter-Prayer as self-infliction to compensate for the injustice done to a *Śiva*-devotee. These narrations point to the fact that singing of the prayer, and thinking of *Śiva*'s gracious nature will solve perplexities of life (PP. 3985)⁵⁵¹. Physical disabilities, social inequalities, birth restrictions cannot prevent one from the recitation of the Five-Letter-Prayer as envisaged in the life histories of the *nāyaṇmār*.

Cēkkiḷār also shows that the recital of this prayer will promote one from the earthly life to divine abode. A life of virtue and spirit rather than the life of senses require a thorough realization of one's true nature. It is the human body that is responsible for thought, word, and deeds either to direct them towards the path of religious intuition or towards obscenity. If one has to illumine the consciousness and extricate self-centeredness, it should be filled with divine fervor. For this the recital of the Five-Letter - Prayer helps one to great extent. *Cēramān Perumāl*, though a king, due to his divine dispensations, was able to direct his horse to take him to *Kaiās* before *Cuntarar* could reach there, by the recital of this prayer in the horses ears (PP. 4264)⁵⁵². As *Cēramān*

⁵⁵⁰ ‘...தேவாசிரியன் முன்இறைஞ்சி வலம் செய்வாராய்ச் செம்மைபுரி நாவால் இன்பம் உறும்காதல் நமச்சிவாய நல்பதமே ஓவா அன்பில் எடுத்துஓதி...’ (பெ.பு. 3599).

⁵⁵¹ ‘...குலவும் எரிவலம் கொள்வார் அண்டிப்பிரான் திருமாத்து அஞ்செழுத்தும் எடுத்துஓதி மண்டுதழல் பிழம்பின் இடை மகிழ்ந்தருளி உள்புக்கார்’ (பெ.பு. 3985).

⁵⁵² ‘விட்ட வெம்பரிச் செவியினில் புவிமுதல் வேந்தர்தாம் விதியாலே இட்டமாம் சிவமந்திரம் ஓதலின் இருவிசம்புளழப் பாய்ந்து மட்டு அலர்ந்த பைந்தெரியல் வன் தொண்டிர்மேல் கொண்ட மாதங்கத்தை முட்டஎய்தி முன்வலம் கொண்டு சென்றதுமற்று அதன் முன்ஆக’

Perumāḷ was immersed in the contemplation of the noble and auspicious qualities of *Śiva* all the time, it was easy for him to invoke *Śiva*’s blessings.

The distinctive mark recognized by the *nāyaṇmār* and highlighted by *Cēkkiḷār* to adore *Śiva* may be classified as external and internal. The Five-Letter-Prayer is purely internal and subjective while smearing of sacred ashes is external and objective. The latter two are efficacious and sanctified because of their emanation from the body of *Śiva* (PP. 892)⁵⁵³. *Śiva* produces the sacred ashes from His body and the sacred beads form His eyes so that wearers are rewarded with the expulsion of darkness and the attainment of purity – it delivers his devotees from rebirth (PP. 893)⁵⁵⁴. The white ashes of *Śiva* bestows refreshment and pure delight upon all living creatures (PP. 308)⁵⁵⁵. Therefore, true life is found in cherishing the Holy Ash (PP. 488)⁵⁵⁶. In one narration *Cēkkiḷār* states ‘in that town the sacred ash worn as a protection by devotees shone pure white like their hearts, and but its light the darkness of the night was turned to day’ (PP. 1023)⁵⁵⁷. The *nāyaṇmār* wears white ashes as an important duty so as to derive the inspiration to worship *Śiva*; they treasure above all else the sacred ash (PP. 355)⁵⁵⁸. They were people of constant devotion to the sacred ash (PP. 610)⁵⁵⁹. They even rendered service to all who

(பெ.பு. 4269).

‘To that end, he recited in the horse’s ear the much-loved *Śaiva* prayer in the prescribed manner. At once the horse rose in the air and galloped off across the skies...(PP. 4269).

⁵⁵³ ‘முண்டம் நிறை நெற்றியின் மேல் முண்டித்த திருமுடியில் கொண்ட...’ (பெ.பு. 892).

⁵⁵⁴ ‘...மனச் செல் அன்பர் பயம் மாற்றும் திருநீற்றுப் பொக்கணமும்...’ (பெ.பு. 893).

⁵⁵⁵ ‘தோற்றும் மன்உயிர்கட்கு எலாம் தூய்மையே சாற்றும் இன்பமும் தண்மையும் தந்துபோய் ஆற்ற அண்டம் எலாம் பரந்து அண்ணல்வெண் நீற்றின் பேர்ஒளி போன்றது நீள்நிலா’ (பெ.பு. 308).

⁵⁵⁶ ‘...திருநீற்று அன்பு பாதுகாத்து உய்ப்பீர்...’ (பெ.பு. 488).

⁵⁵⁷ ‘நாம மூதூர் மற்றதனுள் நல்லோர் மனம் போல் அவர் அணிந்த சேமம் நிலவு திருநீற்றின் யும இருளும் வெளியார்க்கும் இரவே அல்ல விரை மலர் மேல் காமர் மது உண் சிறைவண்டும் களங்கம் இன்றி விளங்குமால்’ (பெ.பு. 1023).

⁵⁵⁸ ‘...உறுவது நீற்றின் செல்வம் எனக்கொளும் உள்ளம் மிக்கார்...’ (பெ.பு. 355).

⁵⁵⁹ ‘தொன்மைத் திருநீற்றுத் தொண்டின் வழிபாட்டின் நன்மைக்கண் நின்றநலம் என்றும் குன்றாதார்’ (பெ.பு. 610).

wore the pure white holy ash (PP. 939)⁵⁶⁰. *Cēkkiḷār* states that the *nāyaṇār* ‘reached the conclusion that commitment to the sacred ash was the true end of life’ (PP. 1875)⁵⁶¹.

According to *Cēkkiḷār*, it is *Śiva* who gives the sacred ashes in the three forms: *karpam* (கர்பம்), *anukarpam* (அனுகர்பம்), *upakarpam* (உபகர்பம்) devoid of *akarpam* (அகர்பம்) or blemishes. *Cēkkiḷār* states that these three forms of sacred ash given by *Śiva*, which may be used, frees one from the guilt of lust and other sins. He further sings: ‘as we now extol the sacred ash, may that free us from the bondage of two-fold deeds’ (PP. 4168)⁵⁶². *Pukaḷcōḷa nāyaṇār* shuddered at the sight of a slain having braided hair and was dispirited about his rule which had the path of the sacred ashes. He felt sore and bade his minister’s crown and his son and as a mark of reparation and he descended into a pit of fire by smearing his body with holy ashes. The holy ashes sanctify the wearer though they are otherwise irreligious (PP.3947-3987). This idea has been well brought out by *Cēkkiḷār* in *Narasinga Muṇaiyaraiyar purāṇam* (PP. 3988-3996). When the *nāyaṇār* was offering gold coins, as usual, to the devotees who wear the holy ashes on the occasion of *Tiruvādirai* festival, a man with physical disability came there with sacred ash. While others looked at him with annoyance, the king received him too and offered gifts. *Enātinādar* (PP. 608-649) and *Meypporuḷ nāyaṇār* (PP. 467-490) sacrificed their lives for the noble cause of admitting even traitors and enemies into the realm of devotees of *Śiva*, since they were seen with sacred ashes over their forehead and body. *Enātinādar* declared that his enemy had become a *Śaivite*. *Meypporuḷ* noted that the man who slashed

⁵⁶⁰ ‘...தூயகடர்த்திரு நீறுவிரும்பு தொழும்பு உள்ளார்...’ (பெ.பு. 939).

⁵⁶¹ ‘...தூய்மைத் திருநீற்று அடைவே மெய்ப் பொருள் என்று அறியும் துணிவினார்...’ (பெ.பு. 1875).

⁵⁶² ‘...முன்றுபேத மோகாதி குற்றங்கள் அறுக்கும் நீற்றை மொழிவதுநம் இருவினைகள் கழிவதுஆக’ (பெ.பு. 4168).

him was really one of his own i.e. to be treated as his kith and kin and not an enemy (PP. 482)⁵⁶³. In the pursuit of release, the sacred ash took a prominent role by way of purifying the *nāyaṇmār* both externally and internally. In other words in the religious pursuits both the physically manifested marks and the psychical inspirations play a vital role.

It also should be noted the *nāyaṇmār* also followed other means of reaching the feet of the *Śiva*. *Cēkkiḷār* noted that he wishes to bow down before the sacred feet of *Tirumūlar nāyaṇār* who expounded in verses the well-ordained path of *jñānam* (ஞானம்), *yōga* (யோக), *kriyai* (கிரிகை) and *caryai* (சரிகை) (PP. 3596)⁵⁶⁴. Among them for *Cēkkiḷār caryai* (சரிகை) external observances or acts of service of the *nāyaṇmār* such as cleaning the temple premises, gathering flowers for weaving garlands to adorn the deity; honouring the devotees and preparing oneself for their service at any moment; befittingly keeping the temple precincts, nurturing flower garden, neatly maintaining water tanks, preserving sculptures, monuments, inscriptions and so forth is the initial stage of *Śiva*-worship: a pathway followed by the *nāyaṇmār* to reach the feet of *Śiva*. This pathway comprises of temple worship as a preparatory ground to actively participate in daily worship. It has been replenished with religious fervour which in turn culminates in regular worship. Further, the external modes of service and worship should not create any kind of pride by claiming agency for the activities and strengthen the self-worth. As long as the aspirant is under the sway of the dragging forces like sensualism, hardly can one enter the domain of *Śiva*, which in fact, is the effort of following this path. It for this for

⁵⁶³ ‘...தறைப்படும் அளவில் தத்தா நமர்எனத் தடுத்து வீழ்ந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 482).

⁵⁶⁴ ‘நலம் சிறந்தான யோகக் கிரியை சரியை எலாம் மலர்ந்த மொழிந்த திருமுல தேவர் மலர்க்கழல் வணங்கி...’ (பெ.பு. 3596).

this reason *Cēkkiḷār* dedicates entire section of his work to honour ‘those who attend the person of Lord three times a day’ (PP. 4165-4167)⁵⁶⁵.

In the introductory section of his work *Cēkkiḷār* narrates that the ‘holy servants of *Śiva* dispel the darkness in the hearts of men’ (PP. 10)⁵⁶⁶. From the life narration of the *nāyaṇmār*, *Cēkkiḷār* illustrates the sublimation of their self-centered passions i.e. forces which lead one from light to darkness such as anger, lust and jealousy towards the attainment of *Śiva*. It is obvious in the *Periya Purāṇam* the lustful enjoyment of *Tirunīlakaṇṭar* was later transformed into sincere adoration of *Śiva* through selfless service (PP. 360-403). Anger is said to be the pernicious passion of humankind. The only way to overcome this destructive phenomenon is to canalize it towards righteous indignation, as was done by *Eṇipattar* in directing his wrath the impediments in obstructing the efforts to worship *Śiva* (PP. 550-607). Jealousy can be sublimated towards the rightful claim of getting equal opportunity in worshipping *Śiva*. This point may be substantiated from the lives of *Campantar* and *Appar*. When there was acute famine at *Tirvīlimiḷalai* and its suburbs, these two saints intended to eradicate poverty for which they sought the merciful help of *Śiva*. As a result of disinterested service, self-centredness becomes subdued and consequently the three impurities are gradually annihilated, the devotee freely moves into a new domain i.e. to *Siva*’s abode. There *Śiva* is conceived as the master to whom the devout devotee becomes a subservient agent and loyal servant.

⁵⁶⁵ ‘முப்போதும் திருமேனி தீண்டுவார் புராணம்...’ (பெ.பு. 4165-4167)

⁵⁶⁶ ‘...மாக்கள் சிந்தையுள் சார்ந்து நின்ற பொங்கிய இருளை ஏனைப் புறஇருள் போக்குகின்ற... திருத்தொண்டர் புராணம் என்பாம்’ (பெ.பு. 10).

Some other *nāyaṇmār* followed the path of an obedient son. The *nāyaṇmār* considered themselves as the son of the ‘Father’ i.e. *Śiva* (PP. 1404)⁵⁶⁷. The dedication of the *nāyaṇār* (son) towards *Śiva* (father) results in worshipping the Lord, singing His glory out of increasing love and establishing an intimate relationship. *Śiva*, the father takes His responsibility to educate the *nāyaṇār* make them wise and virtuous. *Cēkkiḷār* narrates, though *Campantar* was subjected to troubles by the *Jains*, earlier he had the benefit of drinking the milk of divine wisdom and receiving the palanquin, umbrella made up of pearls through the grace of *Śiva*. By fulfilling the wishes of the Father, the son has the privilege of going near His residence with affection. In his onward march the *nāyaṇmār* departs from his temporary house i.e. the world to the house of *Śiva* (PP. 147-349). The sense of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ will have no power due to the actions of various kinds as mentioned above and the *nāyaṇmār* freely approached *Śiva* in his domain. Hence this is a intimate path which leads one closer to *Śiva* which if further seen to be fulfilled in *Kaṇṇappar*’s life who had been asked by *Śiva* ‘Take your place at my right hand’ (PP. 834)⁵⁶⁸.

Further, worship in this path is being related to *Śiva-lingam* and the devotee has to perform the five kinds of purificatory rituals with flowers, incense, light, water and food. The aspirant has to chant the particular formula for a given number of times. As narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Caṇṇeswarar* and *Umādevi* worshipped the *Śiva-lingam* made up of sand by them and *Cākkiya nāyaṇār* turned to be a *Śaivite* by spontaneously worshipping a *Śiva-lingam* (PP. 1211-1270). The worship of *Śiva-lingam* and chanting

⁵⁶⁷ ‘ஈன்றாளுமாய் எனக் கெந்தையும் ஆதி...’ (பெ.பு. 140).

‘He is the mother who bore me, and my father too..’ (PP. 1404).

⁵⁶⁸ ‘... என் வலத்தில் மாறு இலாய் நிற்க என்று...’ (பெ.பு. 834).

the sacred syllables had become part and parcel of the *nāyaṇmār*'s life. This path subsequently leads to the practice of *yōga*; another path that was followed by the *nāyaṇmār*.

According to *Cēkkiḷār* some other *nāyaṇmār* chose a more austere path i.e. the path of *yōgam* (யோகம்)⁵⁶⁹ to attain the feet of *Śiva*. According to *Cēkkiḷār*, *Tirumūlar* was steeped in *Śiva-yōgam* after the cessation of the impediments (PP. 3593)⁵⁷⁰. As a first thing, one has to relinquish the worldly bearings and move towards *Śiva*. For *Cēkkiḷār* those who followed this path even recognized themselves as an intimate friend of God on the basis of love. The discipline is an internal exercise, the fruit of which is the attainment of divine attributes. The followers of this path were blessed with the attainment of *Śiva*'s forms along with the extinction of impurities and its inflictions. In the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cuntarar* is the typical exponent of this path, not so much of his systematic practices of *yōgam* but for his propensity and spiritual aspirations even while in family life. The expression by *Cēkkiḷār* will illustrate this point: '...for many days, he wished to master *yōgam* and its age old tradition' (PP. 327).⁵⁷¹ The practice of *yōgam*, according *Cēkkiḷār*, leading to release is found in the narration of the life of the following *nāyaṇmār* such as *Perumīlalaik Kuṟumpar* (PP. 1711-1721), *Tirumūlar* (PP. 3569-3596) and those who set their hearts on *Śiva* (PP. 4162). *Perumīlalaik Kuṟumpar* was an ardent devotee of both *Śiva* and His devotee *Cuntarar*. By virtue of his daily chanting of *Cuntarar*'s name, he

⁵⁶⁹ Etymologically the word *yōga* means 'yoking' the mind towards God which results in supreme delight. The term generally means 'union' and is referred to in Tamil as *sērkkai* (சேர்க்கை). See Tamil Lexicon of the Madras University. The union of mind and body and the subsequent union of the soul and God are claimed to be the fruits of yogic practices. As a method of release, *yōga* practices make the body and mind function harmoniously where the bodily movements are controlled and mental modifications are arrested so as to create fusion of the body and mind prior to the union of God.

⁵⁷⁰ '...சிவயோகம் தலைநின்று பூ அலரும் இதயத்துப் பொருளோடும் உணர்ந்திருந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 3593).

⁵⁷¹ '...பல்நாளும் பயில் யோகம் பரம்பரையின் விரும்பினார்...' (பெ.பு. 327).

mastered the eight-fold *yōgic* powers. As his devotion grew even more intense, he attained that state in which the Five-Letter-Prayer of *Śiva* became for him family, riches and the content of very thought. He saw through his *yōgic* vision *Cuntarar's* march towards Mount *Kailās* on a white elephant. He immediately exercised his *yōgic* powers and reached *Kailās* even before *Cuntarar* (PP. 1711-1721). At this stage the *nāyaṇmār* claims fraternity with *Śiva* for reason that the *nāyaṇmār*, the *Śiva yōgins* are those who have realized the reality that underlines the universe in the depth of their inner self (PP. 3101). The cordial friendship between *Śiva* and His devotees is seen in the friendly succour of *Śiva* to *Campantar* and the latter's demand of friendship on the former. *Cēkḱilār* describes that *Śiva* Himself went as an errand for this *nāyaṇār*, as a beggar to appease his appetite and in turn the *nāyaṇār* scolds his friend i.e., *Śiva* out of loveable fraternity (PP. 507).

Another path that is highlighted by *Cēkḱilār* is the path of *jñānam* (ஞானம்) or wisdom. The path of *jñānam* (ஞானம்) or wisdom is the saving wisdom of *Śiva* i.e. *Śiva-jñānam* (சிவஞானம்) which *Campantar* experienced. The wisdom which was imparted on the *nāyaṇār* consists of wisdom which made the *nāyaṇār* focus singularly, and ceaselessly conscious of the feet of *Śiva*. It is wisdom at once the infallible and divine and the unparalleled wisdom of all science (PP. 1973)⁵⁷². Such wisdom enables one to cleanse all impurities. *Cēkḱilār* as the verse indicates calls this wisdom as intuitive knowledge i.e., *mei-jñānam* (மெய்ஞானம்) or *ariya-mei-jñānam* (அரியமெய்ஞானம்) (PP.

⁵⁷² 'சிவனாடியே சிந்திக்கும் திருப்பெருகு சிவஞானம் பவம் அதனை அறமாற்றும் பாங்கினில் ஓங்கிய ஞானம் உவமைஇலாக் கலைஞானம் உணர்வு அரியமெய்ஞானம் தவம் முதல்வர் சம்பந்தர் தாம் உணர்ந்தார் அந்நிலையில்' (பெ.பு. 1973).

1973)⁵⁷³ i.e., wisdom which is rare, the knowledge of reality or truth i.e. *mei-poruḷ* (மெய்ப்பொருள்) (PP. 2029)⁵⁷⁴. Therefore, this path of *jñānam* (ஞானம்) or wisdom is designated as *mei-yuṇarvu* (மெய்யுனர்வு) the knowledge of the true nature of self that can be obtained in this life. Such wisdom enables one to unite the knot of ignorance. In the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkkiḷār* narrates, *Kaṇṇappār* was praised by *Śiva* whose knowledge was directed to know Him and whose activities were admired by Him (PP. 806)⁵⁷⁵. Once the wisdom of *Śiva* imparted on the *nāyaṇmār*, they surrender themselves in gratitude to *Śiva*: the magnetization of their selves towards Godly ways of conception and contemplation culminates in the enlightenment that it is *Śiva* who knows, who makes others know, and becomes the very embodiment of knowledge itself. The *nāyaṇmār* at this stage with the in flow of grace loves *Śiva* in perfect wisdom (PP. 1973)⁵⁷⁶.

Cēkkiḷār declares the true knowledge of *Śiva* is the love towards Him (ஞானம் ஈசன் பால் அன்பே) and his contention is illustrated in the life of *Muruga nāyaṇār*. The *nāyaṇār* had the spotless heart which melts in perfect love towards *Śiva*'s feet and thus gained wisdom (PP. 1026)⁵⁷⁷. Therefore, *Śiva-jñānam* (சிவஞானம்) is *Śivananda* (சிவஆனந்தம்) or endless bliss which is not alien to the one but is the sustaining life principle in one. *Cēkkiḷār* narrates that the *Ciruttoṇṭar* after mastering all the arts, comes

⁵⁷³ ‘... உணர்வு அரியமெய்ஞ்ஞானம்...’ (பெ.பு. 1973)

⁵⁷⁴ ‘மெய்ப்பொருள் ஆயினாரை...’ (பெ.பு. 2029).

⁵⁷⁵ ‘அவனுடைய வடிவு எல்லாம் நம் பக்கம் அன்பு என்றும்
அவனுடைய அறிவு எல்லாம் நமை அறியும் அறிவு என்றும்
அவனுடைய செயல் எல்லாம் நமக்கு இனியவாம் என்றும்
அவனுடைய நிலை இவ்வாறு அறிநீ என்று அருள் செய்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 806).
‘His whole being is filled with love for me. His whole mind is set on me alone;
All he does is pleasing in my sight; you have to understand, that is the way he is’ (PP. 806).

⁵⁷⁶ ‘... பவம் அதனை அறமாற்றும் பாங்கினில் ஓங்கிய ஞானம்...’ (பெ.பு. 1973).

⁵⁷⁷ ‘... ஞான வரம்பின் தலை நின்றார் நாகம் புனைவார் சேவடிக்கீழ் ஊனம் இன்றி
அன்பால் உருகும் மனத்தார் முருகனார்’ (பெ.பு. 1026).

to the conclusion that the perfect objective in life is to enlighten oneself with *Śiva-jñānam* (சிவஞானம்) (PP. 3668)⁵⁷⁸; intuitive knowledge of *Śiva* will make one enjoy *Śiva*'s bliss.

It is clear then that in the *Periya Purāṇam* each *nāyaṇmār* has seriously engaged himself in removing the taints of their self and laboriously sought *Śiva* with single minded devotion. They adhered to the life of renunciation and sacrifice. Their acts were *Śiva*-centered rather than self-centered. They did worship regularly in the temples and moved affectionately with the *Śiva*-devotees. They were fond of either serving the cause of the Lord or their fellow devotees. Serving the fellow devotees of *nāyaṇmār* is a remarkable aspect in the devotion of the *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam*. It is the latter that is studied in the next section.

6.4 Consorting with Other Devotees: The *Nāyaṇmār* as Servant of the Servants of the Lord

The very structure of the of *Cēkkiḷār*'s work demonstrates the importance given to the fellowship of devotees and of the *nāyaṇmār*. To emphasise this it is narrated that the sage *Upamanyu* worshipped the effulgence caused by the arrival of *Cuntarar* from the earth to *Kailas*, the dwelling place of *Śiva*. Astonishment struck the fellow sages of *Upamanyu* who had not seen him in such a situation. When his companions enquired the reason for his behaviour of worshipping the *nāyaṇār*, other than *Śiva* the *Upamanyu*

⁵⁷⁸ 'உள்ளநிறை கலைத் துறைகள் ஒழிவுஇன்றிப் பயின்று அவற்றால் தெள்ளி வடித்து அறிந்தபொருள் சிவன் கழலில் செறிவு என்றே கொள்ளும் உணர்வினில் முன்னே கூற்று உதைத்த கழற்கு அன்பு...' (பெ.பு. 3668).

replied that since the *nāyaṇār* had *Śiva* as his friend, he had qualified himself to be worshipped by them (PP. 29)⁵⁷⁹.

In the verse, it must be pointed out, which has been skilfully composed by *Cēkkiḷār* the word ‘நாம்’ (*nām*) (we) is noteworthy in three respects: (i) *Upamanyu*, out of humility utters ‘We worship him who is worthy’ (‘நாம் தொழும் தன்மையான்’: ‘*nām tomalum um'maiyāṇ*’) instead of addressing the first person as ‘I’ to avoid self-assertion, (ii) *Upamanyu*, ‘the famous hermit of deep devotion’ (PP. 23)⁵⁸⁰, pays homage to the *nāyaṇār* i.e. *Cuntarar* with a view to ascertain that the *nāyaṇār* to be adored by everyone in the assembly including himself, (iii) and through the mouth *Upamanyu*, *Cēkkiḷār* announces his personal reverence he has for the *nāyaṇār* that he is to be honoured by all.

In his monumental work *Cēkkiḷār* also expresses his submission to every *nāyaṇmār* at end of every narration of the life of the each one of *nāyaṇmār*. As *Cuntarar*, who in his *Tirut Toṇṭar Tokai* (திருத்தொண்டர் தொகை) eulogies the great men and women who had exemplified the life of devotion to *Śiva* and expressed his submission at every stage to these leaders or *nāyaṇmār*, *Cēkkiḷār* too poignantly states: ‘Now we place our head beneath his servant’s feet and meditate upon them. That is the way of life which we esteem above all others’ (PP. 550)⁵⁸¹. As *Cuntarar*, *Cēkkiḷār* also expresses his submission to nine group devotees. They are (i) the Brahmins of Tillai (PP. 350-359), (ii)

⁵⁷⁹ ‘சம்புவின அடித்தாமரைப் போது அலால் எம்பிரான் இறைஞ்சாய இ.துஎன் எனத் தம்பிரானைத் தன் உள்ளம் தழீஇயவன் நம்பி ஆருரன் நாம் தொழும் தன்மையான்’ (பெ.பு. 29). ‘Still wanting to dispel their doubts, the Brahmins asked, “Sir, you worship nothing else but the lotus feet of the Lord Sambu. Please tell us what this potent means.” “Vañṭoṇṭar, also known as Nampi Ārūraṇ, held the Lord in his heart”, Upamanyu replied, “We worship him who is worthy.” (PP. 29).

⁵⁸⁰ ‘...அருஞ்சீர் உபமன் னியமுன்’ (பெ.பு. 23).

⁵⁸¹ ‘...உலகு உய்ய ஆண்டு கொள்ளப் பெற்றவர் பாதம் உன்னித் தலைமிசை வைத்து வாழும் தலைமை நம் தலைமை ஆகும்’ (பெ.பு. 550).

those who worship with true devotion (PP. 4152-4159), (iii) those who sing exclusively of the glory of *Śiva*, (PP. 4160-4161) (iv) those who have set their hearts on *Śiva* (PP. 4162) (v) those who are born at *Tiruvārūr* (PP. 4163-4164), (vi) those who attend the person of the Lord three times a day (PP. 4165-4167) (vii) sages who wear the holy ash (PP. 4168-4173) (viii) devotees from far and wide (PP. 4169) (ix) those who are not included in the catalogue of the *nāyaṇmār* (PP. 4170).

To emphasis on the fellowship of devotees *Cēkkiḷār* states that once *Cuntarar* set his heart on the sacred feet of *Śiva* and was deeply contemplating of His presence; he failed to notice the group of devotees gathered at *Tiruvārūr* temple and who came out to meet *Cuntarar* with unfeigned affection. On seeing this, *Viṇṇmiṇṭar nāyaṇnār* not only proscribe *Cuntarar* for his inadvertent behaviour but to declare *Cuntarar* excluded from the company of devotees (PP. 497). *Cēkkiḷār* notes when *Viṇṇmiṇṭar* declared *Cuntarar* excluded for avoiding the gathering of devotees, he was also excluding him from keeping company with *Śiva* (PP. 498)⁵⁸². This made *Cuntarar* apologetic and beseeched *Śiva* to come to his rescue. *Śiva* helped *Cuntarar* with the first sentences which formed the first statement of his work *Tirut Toṇṭar Tokai* and the first descriptive exposition by *Cēkkiḷār*: ‘I am servant to the servants of the Brahmins who live at *Tillai*’ (PP. 345)⁵⁸³. *Cēkkiḷār* like *Cuntarar* mentions a number of *nāyaṇmār* and hails them for their service to *Śiva* and his fellow devotees which has enabled him to crave for becoming a humble devotee

⁵⁸² ‘சேண்ஆர் மேருச் சிலை வளைத்த சிவனார் அடியார் திருக்கூட்டம் போணாது ஏகும் ஊரனுக்கும் பிரான் ஆம் தன்மைப் பிறைகூடிப் பூண்ஆர் அரவம் புனைந்தார்க்கும் புறகு என்று உரைக்க மற்றுஅவர்பால் கோணா அருளைப் பெற்றார் மற்று இனியார் பெருமை கூறுவார்’ (பெ.பு. 498).

⁵⁸³ ‘...தில்லைவாழ் அந்தணர்தம் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்’ (பெ.பு. 345).

to them too (PP. 4099)⁵⁸⁴. In a more distinctive manner, *Cēkkiḷār* observes: ‘For the benefit of the world, *Cuntarar* sang “The Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord.” So if the Lord who is beyond all understanding declared his very existence to be bound up with his devotees, how great must be those devotees!’ (PP. 499)⁵⁸⁵.

In this manner, *Cēkkiḷār* considers service to the devotees of the Lord as a veneration that equals or even beyond the devotion to God. In them i.e. in his devotees *Śiva* binds his very existence to enrich the world; they are the embodiment of his divine compassion (கருணை: *karuṇai*) - ‘compassion in human form’ (PP. 1411)⁵⁸⁶; ‘their life is a life of worship and penance offered in love at the feet of the Lord’ (PP. 352)⁵⁸⁷. They count their love for *Śiva* ‘as the greatest blessing of their lives’ (PP.355)⁵⁸⁸. *Cēkkiḷār* extols of the *nāyaṇmār* rendering service to the devotees of the Lord, in varying degrees according to their propensity.

The sole objects of his concern were the devotees of the Lord *Śiva*. Apart from them, he knew no other loyalty. He held the conviction that the wealth that had come down to him properly belonged to those devotees. So when any one of the *nāyaṇmār* approached him, he found great joy in giving alms to meet their needs (PP. 469-470)⁵⁸⁹.

584 ‘யாவர் எனினும் இகல் எறிந்தே ஈசன்அடியார் தமக்கு இன்பம் மேவஅளிக்கும் முனையாடுவார் விரைப்பூங் கமலக் கழல்வணங்கித் தெவர்பெருமான் சைவநெறி விளங்கச் செங்கோல் முறைபுரியும் காவல்பூண்டகழற்சிங்கர் தொண்டின்நிலைமை கட்டுரைப்பாம்’ (பெ.பு. 4099).

585 ‘ஞாலம் உய்ய நாம் உய்ய நம்பி சைவ நல்நெறியின் சீலம்உய்ய திருத்தொண்டத் தொகை முன்பாடச் செழுமறைகள் ஓலம் இடவும் உணர்வு அரியார் அடியாருடனாம் உளது என்றால் ஆலம் அழுது செய்தபிரான் அடியார் பெருமை அறிந்தார் ஆர்’ (பெ.பு. 499).

586 ‘... கருணை கண்டால் மீண்டுஆய செய்கை....’ (பெ.பு.1411).

587 ‘...நீற்றினால் நிறைந்தகோல நிருத்தனுக்கு உரியதொண்டு ஆம் பேற்றினார் பெருமைக்கு எல்லை ஆயினார் பேணி வாழும் ஆற்றினார் பெருகும் அன்பால் அடித்தவம் புரிந்து வாழ்வார்’ (பெ.பு. 352).

588 ‘...உறுவது நீற்றின் செல்வம் எனக்கொளும் உள்ளம் மிக்கார் பெறுவது சிவன்பால் அன்பாம் பேறு எனப் பெருகி வாழ்வார்’ (பெ.பு. 355).

589 ‘...பொங்கிய சிறப்பின் மல்கப் போற்றுதல் புரிந்து வாழ்வார் தங்கள் நாயகருக்கு அன்பர் தாள் அலால் சார்பு ஒன்று இல்லார். தேடிய மாடு நீடு செல்வமும் தில்லை மன்றுள் ஆடிய பெருமான் அன்பர்க்கு ஆவன ஆகும் என்று நாடிய மனத்தினோடு நாயன்மார் அணைந்த போது கூடிய மகிழ்ச்சி பொங்கக் குறைவு அறக் கொடுத்து உவந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 469-470).

In the fellowship of the *nāyaṇmār* it is clear there are an unstinted devotion as well as unswerving affinity and the absence of resentment. Even if they had indignation it might have been for good reason. One of the few incidents that can be cited to authenticate this claim in the *Periya Purāṇam* is found in the narration of the life of *Eripattar* (PP. 550-607). This *nāyaṇār*'s devotion towards the devotees and interception to punish the evil designers took violent shape. He killed not only the royal elephant since the elephant not only damaged the flower basket meant for *Śiva* by sage *Sivakāmiyāṇṭār* but also its keepers who were witnessing the cruelty of elephant instead of preventing it. Since such acts are performed assisted by *Śiva*, the essence of such a life of service has a deeper conviction and eagerness. It is an eagerness which impels the *nāyaṇmār*, with the desire to engage in the service of the devotees of the Lord and thereby it becomes a mystical experience of *Śiva*.

‘The Lord is enshrined in the minds of true devotees, poised in love ... and service; ... *Śiva* abides forever. Forever he abides in the hearts of his loving devotees. In order to dispel the illusion, *Eripatter* ... performed acts of service for those who belonged to the Lord’ (PP. 556)⁵⁹⁰.

In another instance *Cēkkilār* narrates that *Ēyarkōṇ Kalikkār* harshly condemned the attitude of *Cuntarar* for sending *Śiva* on an errand to set right the love-squabble between the *nāyaṇār* and his wife – an act decrying the persona of *Śiva* (PP. 3167)⁵⁹¹. Even though *Ēyarkōṇ Kalikkār* suffered from violent stomach pain, the *nāyaṇār* was reluctant to meet *Cuntarar* for he send *Śiva* as a his messenger to settle the quarrel with

⁵⁹⁰ ‘பொருள்திரு மறைகள் தந்த புனிதரை இனிது அக்கோயில் மருள்துறை மாற்றும் ஆற்றால் வழபாடும் தொழிலராகி இருள்கடு ஒருங்கு கண்டத்து இறையவர்க்கு ஊரிமை பூண்டார்க்கு அருள்பெரும் தொண்டு செய்வார் அவர் எறிபத்தர் ஆவார்’ (பெ.பு. 556).
⁵⁹¹ ‘நாவலுார் மன்னர் நாதனைத் தூதுவிட்டு அவனுக்கு யாவர் இச்செயல் புரிந்தகை என்று அவர் இழிப்பத் தேவர்தம்பிரான் அவர்திரும் திருந்திய அதற்கு மேவந்த அச்செயலினை விளம்புவான் உற்றேன்’ (பெ.பு. 3167).

his wife (PP. 3555)⁵⁹². Not willing to be cured by *Cuntarar*, *Ēyarkōṇ Kalikkār* took out his dagger and stabbed it into his stomach. The moment *Cuntarar* saw *Ēyarkōṇ Kalikkār* dead, he then sized the dagger determined to do away with his life. *Śiva* timely intervened and at that moment *Ēyarkōṇ Kalikkār* came to life (PP. 3563)⁵⁹³. This story reveals that (i) a devotee of *Śiva* may have the audacity to condemn a fellow-devotee if one goes against the tradition, (ii) the devotee has the privilege to end his life rather than receiving help from the irreligious (iii) the *nāyaṇār* had to endure the trials and tribulations launched by benevolent *Śiva* to shape their character at a time of turmoil. *Cēkkiḷār* records that it is *Śiva* who send the *Ēyarkōṇ Kalikkār* a stomach pain as a way of effecting a reconciliation between *Cuntarar* and *Ēyarkōṇ Kalikkār* (PP. 3548)⁵⁹⁴.

It is a natural human tendency to avert abuse, injury, defilement done to one's dear ones. But in religious life this attitude is viewed seriously. In the *Periya Purāṇam* any harm is inflicted on *Śiva* devotees, the evil doers will not be spared for the simple reason that the devotees have been treated on par with *Śiva*. So *Cēkkiḷār* supplements the idea of service to fellowmen which has the implicit connotation 'service to *Śiva*'. To illustrate this point *Cēkkiḷār* narrates the story of *Mangayatkkarasiyār* and *Kulacciṛaiyār*, the queen and the minister of the *Pāṇṇian king*, made strenuous efforts to extend royal protection to *Campantar* from the persecutions of the Jains at Madurai. At one stage, they

⁵⁹² '...வன்தொண்டர் வரவும் கேட்டுத் தூதனாய் எம்பிரானை ஏவினான் சூலைதீர்க்கும் ஏதம் இங்கு எய்த எய்தில் யான்செய்வது என்னாம் என்பார்' (பெ.பு. 3555).

⁵⁹³ 'கோள்உறு மன்த்தர்ஆகிக் குற்று உடைவாளைப் பற்ற ஆளுடைத் தம்பிரானார் அருளினால் அவரும் உய்ந்து கேளிரோ ஆகிக் கெட்டேன் எனவிரைந்து கையில் வாளினைப் பிடித்துக் கொள்ள வன்தொண்டர் வணங்கி வீழ்ந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 3563).

⁵⁹⁴ 'நாள்தொறும் பணிந்து போற்ற நாதரும் அதனை நோக்கி நீடிய தொண்டர் தம்முன் இருவரும் மேவும் நீர்மை கூடுதல் புரிவார் ஏயர் குரிசிலார் தம்பால்மேனி வாடுஉறு சூலை தன்னை அருளினார் வருந்தும் ஆற்றால்' (பெ.பு. 3548).

had even resolved to lay down their lives first if the *nāyaṇār*'s life was threatened, according to *Cēkkiḷār* (PP. 2581-2679).

Such exemplary service and companionship is at the innermost quintessence of the real love of *Śiva* which paves the way for religious coalescence which gets translated in a life of sincerity and self-less service. One must never speculate on anything disgraceful rather one must engage irresistibly in the service of the devotees of the *Śiva* in a spirit of service; then life will naturally become one of virtue, humility and living in the presence of Him within and without. Service to devotees of the Lord is the highest expression of one's devotion to *Śiva*. It's very essence lie in their willingness to die to their human personality and to discover and indentify themselves with their true nature. It is such service that reveals the knowledge of *Śiva* to the mundane mind. In relating the story of *Ēṇātinātar*:

‘Day by day all the gain accruing from his work ... he is freely devoted to the support of the servant of the Lord. Even his enemies, had to respect his unswerving practice of virtue which was beyond reproach’ (PP. 611-612)⁵⁹⁵.

The familiarity and association of the *nāyaṇmār* at *Pūmpuhalūr* is considered by *Cēkkiḷār* as a boon to *Tirunāvukkaracar* to move and have his self with them whose minds were one with the love of *Śiva*. This worship of devotees of the Lord even goes beyond the caste divisions and social status that divided the society of the time.

⁵⁹⁵ ‘வாளின்படை பயிற்றி வந்தவனம் எல்லாம் நாளும் பெருவிருப்பால் நண்ணும் கடப்பாட்டில் தாளும் தட முடியும் காணாதார் தம்மையும் தொண்டு ஆளும் பெருமை அடித்தொண்டர்க்கு ஆக்குவார்’. நள்ளாப்புகளும் போற்றும்நன்மைத் துறையின்கன் எள்ளாத செய்கை இயல்பின் ஒழுகும் நாள் தள்ளாத தங்கள் தொழிவ் உரிமைத் தாயத்தின் உள்ளான் அதிகூரன் என்பான் உள்ள ஆனான்’ (பெ.பு. 612-612).

‘Whether they were members of one of the four recognized castes or not, provided only that they were devotees of *Śiva*, he would humbly pay homage with all his heart’ (PP. 1702)⁵⁹⁶.

This services of the *nāyaṇmār* for *Cēkkiḷār* impelled them to awaken to *Śiva*. It liberates the person from conditioned ignorance of darkness in the inner self and bestows to the person, perfection of bliss that leads the self from the unreal to the real. It is for this reason, *Cēkkiḷār* recounts ‘that the *nāyaṇār* considered all of their wealth to belong as of right to those who enjoyed the true riches of being servants to the Lord’ (PP.879)⁵⁹⁷. *Cēramān Perumāḷ* *nāyaṇmār* worshipped a washerman just because his body was drenched in rain and dried up which appeared as if he had smeared white ashes. The king’s touching of the feet of washerman is highly remarkable. But the idea that *Cēkkiḷār* communicates is that the mere appearance of the human body in sacred ashes makes the true aspirant bow before him. Again, the love shown towards a fellow devotee does not require status not dignity but divinity. As *Cēkkiḷār* depicts *Cēramān*’s fraternal movements with *Cuntarar* did not continue only on earth. The former was prepared to offer his kingdom to the latter as a token of his love towards him. However, *Cuntarar* safely refused the offer since material wealth is inferior to the true love he had for the king (PP. 3753-3928).

Further, *Cēkkiḷār*’s literary creativity is shown whenever he describes the meeting of the devotees, particularly on places where *Cuntarar* and *Campanar* meet. *Cēkkiḷār* exquisitely depicts their physical movements, spiritual exertions and religious experience

⁵⁹⁶ ‘காரணம் கண்ணுதற்கு அன்பர் என்னவே வாரம் ஆகி மகிழ்ந்து அவர் தாள்மிசை ஆரும் அன்பொடு வீழ்ந்து அஞ்சலி முகிழ்த்து ஈர நன்தொழி எய்த இசைக்குளார்’ (பெ.பு. 1702).
⁵⁹⁷ ‘மாறு இல்பெருஞ் செல்வத்தின் வளம் பெருக மற்றது எலாம் ஆறு உலவும் சடைக்கற்றை அந்தணர்தம் அடியாராம் ஈறுஇல் பெருந்திரு உடையார் உடையார் என்று யாவையும் நேர் கூறுவதன் முன் அவர்தம் குறிப்பு அறிந்து கொடுத்துள்ளார்’ (பெ.பு. 879).

(PP.2174)⁵⁹⁸. *Appūti Aṭikaḷ* even without having had a glimpse of *Tirunāvukkaracar* was devoted to the feet of *Tirunāvukkaracar* (PP. 1788)⁵⁹⁹. Everything in his house from the weights and measures to his cattle and his children bore *Tirunāvukkaracar*'s name (PP.1789)⁶⁰⁰. When *Tirunāvukkaracar* approached him without in disguised and enquired about why he has inscribed on this fountain someone else's name rather than his own, *Appūti Aṭikaḷ* was wild and expressed his displeasure in such enquiry (PP. 1799-1780)⁶⁰¹. When he came to know that the very person standing before him was none other than his beloved adorer his joy overflowed the measure. For the *nāyaṇmār* contemplating the holy feet of *Śiva* is the criterion to confirm anyone as their fellow devotee. Love of *Śiva* is the foundation of very forms of *Śiva* worship, which again forms the basis of the fellowship of devotees. Meagre importance had been given to the social status, political leadership, birth etc., in determining the nature of service of the *nāyaṇmār*. *Cēkkiḷār* also appreciates *Narasīṅga Munaiyaraīyar nāyaṇār* who would not turn away even the sinful devotees because of their allegiance to the tradition of the white ashes (PP. 3988-3996).

⁵⁹⁸ 'கண்டகவுணியக் கன்றும் கருத்தில் பரவு மெய்க்காதல் தொண்டர் திருவேடம் நேரே தோன்றியது என்று தொழுதே அண்டவரும் போற்ற அணைந்து அங்கு அரசு எதிர்வந்து இறைஞ்ச மண்டிய ஆர்வம் பெருக மதுரமொழி அருள் செய்தார்' (பெ.பு. 2174).

"Now mine eyes have seen what a real servant of the Lord should look like," cried Campantar, "one whose heart is truly filled with love". Amid the praises of the gods, Aracar came forward and made obeisance. Campantar too paid homage, and with rising excitement spoke kindly words of greeting' (PP. 2174).

⁵⁹⁹ 'தாண்டவம் புரிய வல்ல தம்பிரானருக்கு அன்பர் ஈண்டிய புகழின் பாலார் எல்லை இல் தவத்தின் மிக்கார் ஆண்ட சீர் அரசின் பாதம் அடைந்து அவர் அறியா முன்னே காண்பதகு காதல் கூரக் கலந்த அன்பினராய் உள்ளார்' (பெ.பு. 1788).

⁶⁰⁰ '...மனைப்பால் உள்ள அளவை கொள் நிறைகோள் மக்கள் ஆவொடு மேதி மற்றும் ஊளளலாம் அரசின் நாமம் சாற்றும் அவ் ஒழுக்கலாற்றார்' (பெ.பு. 1789).

⁶⁰¹ 'ஆறு அணியும் சடை முடியார் அடியார்க்கு நீர்வைத்த ஈறு இல் பெரும் தண்ணீர்ப் பந்தரில் நும் பெயர் எழுதாதே வேறு ஒருபேர் முன் எழுத வேண்டிய காரணம் என்சொல்' (பெ.பு. 1779)

'நின்ற மறையோர் கேளா நிலை அழிந்த சிந்தையராய் நன்றருளிச் செய்தீர் நாண் இல் அமன்' (பெ.பு. 1800).

Cēkkiḷār communicates that all religious experiences are based on engagements in the right spiritual activity or service. Such services always had to be practiced and perfected. They are the guarantee of illumination and divine perfection in the here and now. *Cēkkiḷār* notes ‘with unwavering love and joy they delight in worshipping God and his servants’ (PP. 4154)⁶⁰², ‘nothing can frighten such servants of the devotee of the Lord’ (PP. 1386)⁶⁰³. Therefore, *Cēkkiḷār* exclaims that it is a ‘pleasure to recount at length the history of the sacred history of the sacred service performed by the leaders of the ancient time’ (PP. 47)⁶⁰⁴. This service is nothing else but a great privilege of loving the Lord. It seeks nothing but only *Śiva* himself. To illustrate this point the life of *Kalikkamba nāyanār* as narrated in *Cēkkiḷār*’s work is quite important. The *nāyanār*’s wife showed disdain and looked down on devotees of *Śiva* who was once their servant. However, *Kalikkamba* deplored seriously her attitude and he himself revered the sage (PP. 4017-4026).

It has to be noted here as it is presented by *Cēkkiḷār*, *Tirunāvukkaracar* once carried the palanquin in which *Campantar* was sitting. Both of them went together to several temples of *Śiva* and engaged in social services, thereby dispelling the distress of the people. *Campantar* addressed *Tirunāvukkaracar* as “*Apparē*” (அப்பர்) meaning ‘father’ and latter responded to saying “*Aṭiyēn*” (அடியேன்) i.e. your servant (PP.1452)⁶⁰⁵. The lives of these *nāyanār*’s give us a luminous picture of friendship and fellowship

⁶⁰² ‘அம்கண்ணை அடியாரை ஆராத காதலினால் பொங்கிவரும் உவகையுடன்...’ (பெ.பு.4154).

⁶⁰³ ‘...அடியோம் நாம் அஞ்சுவது இல்லை என்று என்றே’ (பெ.பு. 1386).

⁶⁰⁴ ‘என்று மாமுனி வன்தொண்டர் செய்கையை அன்று சொன்னபடியால் அடியவர் தொன்று சீர்த்திருத் தொண்டத் தொகைவிரி இன்று என் ஆதரவால் இங்கு இயம்புகேன்’ (பெ.பு. 47).

⁶⁰⁵ ‘...எழுது அரிய மலர்க்கையால் எடுத்து இறைஞ்சி விடையின் மேல் வருவார் தம்மை அமுது அழைத்துக் கொண்டவர்தாம் அப்பரே என அவரும் அடியேன் என்றார்’ (பெ.பு. 1452).

cutting across the barriers of cast and age. Perfect freedom lies for the *nāyanmār* in revering a devotee of *Śiva* and serving Him. Love of *Śiva* is the foundation of every form of worship, which again forms the basis of the fellowship of devotee.

6.5 Summary:

The *Periya Purāṇam* is an inestimable hagiography of the seers of truth i.e., the *nāyanmār*. The goal of life for this *nāyanmār* as presented in the *Periya Purāṇam* is release from all impurities that thwarts the vision of seeing, serving *Śiva* and His devotees (PP. 753)⁶⁰⁶. This view of release is addressed throughout the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 343)⁶⁰⁷. In describing the nature of the release, *Cēkkiḷār* explains, the *nāyanmār* became one with *Śiva* (PP.752)⁶⁰⁸. Such realization itself is the supreme bliss (சிவானந்தம் : *Śivāṇantam*). In other words, it is a state of release where the *nāyanmār* enjoy in realizing their true natural essence in *Śiva*.

The ultimate goal of existence, however, is eternal service to *Śiva* in His eternal abode. Therefore, the theological vision of release for *Cēkkiḷār* is not a simple vision of a negative notion of the cessation of bondage but it is a divine state of existence for the

⁶⁰⁶ 'திங்கள்சேர் சடையார் தம்மைச் சென்று அவர் காணாமுன்னே அங்கணர் கருணை கூர்ந்த அருள் திருநோக்கம் எய்தத் தங்கிய பவத்தின் முன்னைச் சார்பு விட்டு அகல நீங்கிப் பொங்கிள ஒளியின் நீழல் பொருள்இல் அன்பு உருவம் ஆனார்' (பெ.பு. 753).

'Before he could behold the Lord, *Śiva* in his grace looked with favour upon him. At once *Tiṇṇanār* was freed from the entail of previous sins, and he was transformed into the image of matchless love, abiding in the shade of heavenly light' (PP. 753).

⁶⁰⁷ 'நாதனார் அருளிச் செய்ய நம்பி ஆருரர் நான் இங்கு ஏதம் நீர் நெறியைப் பெற்றேன் என்று எதிர்வணங்கி...' (பெ.பு. 343).

'... "Now I have set my feet upon the path that leads to freedom from all ill," and with that his heart was filled with praise and gratitude' (PP. 343).

⁶⁰⁸ 'நாணனும் அன்பும் முன்பு நளிர்வரை ஏறத் தாமும் பேணு தத்துவங்கள் என்னும் பெருகு சோபானம் ஏறி ஆனையாம் சிவத்தைச் சார அணைபவர் போல ஐயர்...' (பெ.பு. 752).

'Just as the devotee climbs the path of the elements step by step and finally becomes one with *Śiva*, who in turn is one with his Sakti, so *Tiṇṇanār* the embodiment of love climbed the lofty mountain of the Lord...' (PP. 752).

nāyaṇmār who are totally free from all impurities, enjoy the full vision of *Śiva* in the His realm and engage in divine service to Him. There are a number of hymns in which the *Periya Purāṇam* shows the *nāyaṇmār* appealing to *Śiva* to grant them the grace to perform in love the eternal divine service (PP. 3514, 1948).⁶⁰⁹ By this, *Cēkkiḷār* emphasized the *nāyaṇmār*'s preference of service to the *Śiva*.

While affirming the divine service to the Lord *Śiva* as the end goal of life, *Cēkkiḷār* frequently refers to the feet of *Śiva*. *Cēkkiḷār* mentions service to the feet as a means of attaining the supreme desire of life. In singing the glory of the holy mountain the *Brahmins*, while still wanting to dispel their doubts asked, 'Sir, you worship nothing else but the lotus feet of the Lord. Please tells us what this portent means' (PP. 29)⁶¹⁰. *Cēkkiḷār* notes 'it is the feet of *Śiva* that are the source of bondage and release and it was on those feet that I once set my mind' (PP. 300)⁶¹¹. Ultimately, it is *Śiva* who will lead the *nāyaṇmār* to understand their true nature as well as that of *Śiva* himself. When the *nāyaṇmār* reaches this realisation, they attain the grace of endlessly serving the Lord in His eternal abode. This release, therefore, is not a negative liberation of the individual self of the *nāyaṇmār* from bondage. Rather, the *nāyaṇmār* are radically changed from all the impurities that entangle them, to a positive state of existence in the *Śiva*-realms. *Śiva* captures the *nāyaṇmār* with his grace from the forces of impurities that impede human existence.

⁶⁰⁹ '...பாவினேன் தன்னை அன்று வலிய ஆட்கொண்டபற்று...' (பெ.பு. 3514).

'...ஆண்டதிரு முடி எடுத்துப் பெருமழுவர் தொண்டு அல்லால் பிறிதுஇசையோம்...' (பெ.பு. 1948).
'Years ago in grace you made me your servant' (PP. 3514). 'We are committed to nothing but to the service of the Lord *Śiva*' (PP.1948).

⁶¹⁰ 'சம்புவின அடித்தாமரைப் போது அலால் எம்பிரான் இறைஞ்சாய் இ.'துஎன் எனத் தம்பிரானைத் தன் உள்ளம் தழீஇயவன் நம்பி ஆருரன் நாம் தொழும் தன்மையான்' (பெ.பு. 29).

⁶¹¹ 'பந்தம் வீடுத ரும்பர மன்கழல்...' (பெ.பு. 300).

The references to the feet of the *Śiva* indicate that this *nāyaṇmār* with great humility, considered divine service as the supreme goal in life. This aspect of service had a great influence on *Cēkkiḷār*. It is for this reason at the end of every narration *Cēkkiḷār* makes the point of praising the service performed by the *nāyaṇmār*. e.g. at the end of the narration on the life of *Iyarpakaiyār*, *Cēkkiḷār* praises him, stating ‘I have recounted the great deeds of this servant of the Lord, who tirelessly relived distress and reckoned his wife too to be a friend of God. Now I shall tell the noble story of *Māraṇ* who won eternal praise by the loving service which he offered to the devotees of the Lord’ (PP. 439)⁶¹².

Further, to reach the feet of *Śiva*, the *nāyaṇmār* also consorted with other devotees. This was their wish and they worshiped the devotees as verily as *Śiva* himself. When they did not worship the devotee themselves as *Śiva*, they worshipped the temple of *Śiva* as the Lord Himself. Service of every kind, from sweeping the premises and keeping it free of dirt and weeds, to the providing of oil for the lamps of the temple, to the providing of wicks for those lamps, to the providing of incense, all these and more services were the forms the worship of the temple as *Śiva* himself took. With *Śiva*, worship of the devotees and worship at the temple, both countered as worship of Himself. By this *Cēkkiḷār* leads one not only to understand the paths followed by the *nāyaṇmār* i.e., *Cariya*, *Kriya*, *Yōgam* and *Jñānam* which amplified the efforts of the *nāyaṇmār* to hold together in thought and worship the different aspect of *Śiva*-worship but also to the core of the *nāyaṇmār*’s self awareness of *Śiva* as the subject implying knowledge or continues memory i.e., *Jñānam*, virtuous conduct or self-submission to *Śiva* i.e., *kriyai*,

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‘இன்புஉறு தாரம் தன்னை ஈசனுக்கு அன்பர் என்றே துன்பு உறாது உதவும் தொண்டர் பெருமையைத் தொழுது வாழ்த்தி அன்புஉறு மனத்தால் நாதன் அடியவற்கு அன்புநீடு மன்புகழ் இயைசை மாறன் வளத்தினை வழுத்தல் உற்றேன்’ (பெ.பு. 439).

dedicated action and service to fellow devotees i.e., *Cariya* and discipline to achieve such attitudes i.e., *Yōga*. These acts won release for the *nāyaṇmār* and led them to wash away all the impurities and to be at service of *Śiva*. However, *Śiva* did not just go by acts, but looked into the hearts of the devotees and found that the love throbbing therein was the fountain which led the *nāyaṇmār* to be with *Śiva*. Such is the greatness of the chronicles recorded by *Cēkkiḷār* in the *Periya Purāṇam*: *nāyaṇmār* are true examples of servants of *Śiva*.

PART III

THE IDEAL OF SERVICE AND MORALITY IN THE *PERIYA PURĀṆAM*

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE IDEAL OF SERVICE IN THE *PERIYA PURĀṆAM*

7.1 Introduction

The ideal of service (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*) as a path of devotion and a spiritual discipline to be pursued which the *nāyaṇmār* demonstrated as ‘servants’ (தொண்டர்: *tonṭar*) or ‘slaves’ (*aṭiyār*: அடியார்; literally, ‘one who is at the feet’ of the Lord) for the attainment of *Śiva* is at the heart of the entire composition of the *Periya Purāṇam*. It is noted by *Cēkkiḷār* that ‘when *Nampi* had finished his song, *Śiva* wished to grant him the boon which he desired. So he explained to *Nampi* the nature of the service which the devotees perform, and the secret of their greatness’ (PP. 341)⁶¹³. In the subsequent narration, *Cēkkiḷār* reiterate the entire spirit of service and the secret of the *nāyaṇmār*’s greatness in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 342)⁶¹⁴.

Service (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*), then, infused with the zest of love called *anpu* (அன்பு) which the *nāyaṇmār* had for *Śiva* is at the centre of the *nāyaṇmār*’s life, their shared motif and it is a central theme that unifies the stories of the *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 342).⁶¹⁵ It is this undeviating service to *Śiva* and to his devotees is the

⁶¹³ ‘இன்னவாறு ஏத்தும் நம்பிக்கு ஏறுசேவகனார் தாமும் அந்நிலை அவர்தாம் வேண்டும் அதனையே அருளவேண்டி மன்னுசீர் அடியார் தங்கள் வழித்தொண்டை உணரநல்கிப் பிள்ளையும் அவர்கள் தங்கள் பெருமையை அருளிச் செய்வார்’ (பெ.பு. 341).

⁶¹⁴ ‘பெருமையால் தம்மை ஒப்பார் பேணலால் எம்மைப் பெற்றார் ஒருமையால் உலகைவெல்வார் ஊனம்மேல் ஒன்றும் இல்லார் அருமை ஆம் நிலையில் நின்றார் அன்பினால் இன்பம் ஆர்வார் இருமையும் கடந்து நின்றார் இவரை நீ அடைவாய் என்று’ (பெ.பு. 342).

“There is no one who can compare them,” he said, “By their devotion they have attained me. By their single-minded service, they have conquered the world. They have no imperfection. No one else could reach a state like theirs. Their love for me has brought them untold bliss. They have passed beyond the play of opposites” (PP. 342).

⁶¹⁵ ‘...பேணலால் எம்மைப் பெற்றார் ஒருமையால் உலகைவெல்வார் ... அன்பினால் இன்பம் ஆர்வார்...’ (பெ.பு. 342).

highest qualification for becoming a *tonṭar* (தொண்டர்) i.e. ‘servant’ or *aṭiyār* (அடியார்) i.e. the ‘slave’ of *Śiva*. One could see, therefore, that *Cēkkiḷār* wrote his hagiography as a model for this elevating subject of the *nāyaṇmār*’s devotion to *Śiva* and of his devotees. This is further evidence in the title which *Cēkkiḷār* himself gave to his epic *Tirut Tonṭar Purāṇam* (திருத்தொண்டர் புராணம்) or the ‘History of the Holy Servants’. Indeed all of the *nāyaṇmār* were in one way or another committed themselves to *Śiva*’s service (*Śiva Tonṭu*: சிவ தொண்டு) and treated the devotees of *Śiva* as manifestation of *Śiva* himself. *Cēkkiḷār* himself clearly held the loftiest estimation of *nāyaṇmār*’s service (*tonṭu*: தொண்டு), its sanctity and sublimity. It is this ideal of service which is embodied in his beautiful narrative of the acts of the *nāyaṇmār*, ‘the Holy Servants’ (திருத்தொண்டர்: *tirut tonṭar*), in the *Periya Purāṇam*. This chapter, therefore, explores the various facets of the ideal of service as presented in the *Periya Purāṇam*. It seeks to study the emergence of this fundamental ideal of life which must be the basis of all genuine religious experiences. Indeed, to be in *Śiva* is to be in *Śiva*’s service and His devotees. The chapter is divided into the following parts:

7.2 The Ideal of Service in the *Periya Purāṇam*

7.3 The Inner Motives for Service in the *Periya Purāṇam*

7.4 The Varieties of Service in the *Periya Purāṇam*

7.5 Summary

‘... By their single-minded service, they have conquered the world ... Their love for me has brought them untold bliss’ (PP. 342).

7.2 The Ideal of Service in the *Periya Purāṇam*

Service or *tonṭu* (தொண்டு) is an integral ideal in the *Periya Purāṇam*'s worldview. To serve *Śiva* (சிவ தொண்டு: *Śiva tonṭu*) and to be His 'servants' or 'slaves' (*aṭiyār*: அடியார்; or *tonṭar*: தொண்டர்) is both the means and end of the *nāyaṇmār*'s religious life. It is predominant in the personality and magnetism of the *nāyaṇmār* as portrayed in the *Periya Purāṇam*. Such is the greatness of their service (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*) 'no one else could reach a state like theirs' (PP. 342)⁶¹⁶. However, it is highly significant as fundamental for the progression of one's religiosity and mysticism – to wash away all the 'taints of deeds' and to be at the service of *Śiva* and His devotees (PP. 648)⁶¹⁷. It is declared 'it was the grace of the dancing Lord that made the elephant to scatter the flowers in the street. His purpose was that the entire world should see how noble the service that you render is' (PP. 598)⁶¹⁸. It is also narrated: 'though for many days there was no food to eat, *Tāyaṇār*'s wife suffered no loss of the love of the Lord; she would gather green leaves from the garden, cook and serve them to her husband, while he dutifully continued his service for the Lord' (PP. 919)⁶¹⁹.

⁶¹⁶ '... ஊனம்மேல் ஒன்றும் இல்லார் அருமை ஆம் நிலையில் நின்றார்...' (பெ.பு. 342).

⁶¹⁷ மற்று இனிநாம் போற்றுவது என் வானோர் பிரான் அருளைப்
பற்றவர் தம் கைவாளால் பாசம் அறுத்தருளிப்
உற்றவரை என்றும் உடம்பிரியா அன்பு அருளிப்
பொன் தொடியாள் பாகனார் பொன்னம்பலம் அணைந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 648).

'What more can we say in praise of his ineffable grace? To sever the bonds of attachment, he made use of the sword in the hand of one who owed him no loyalty. To the one who looked to him for help, he granted the privilege of being with him forever in love that knows no parting...' (PP. 648)

⁶¹⁸ 'தொழும்புதகை அன்பின் மிக்கீர் தொண்டினை மண்மேல் காட்டச் செழும் திருமலரை இன்று
சினக்கரி சிந்தத் திங்கள் கொழுந்து அணிவேணிக் கூத்தர் அருளினால் கூடிற்று என்று அங்கு
எழுந்தது பாகரோடும் யானையும் எழுந்தது அன்றே' (பெ.பு. 598).

⁶¹⁹ 'வைகலும் உணவு இலாமை மனைப் படப்பையினில் புக்கு நைகரம் இல்லா அன்பின்
நங்கைகை அடகு கொய்து பெய்கலத்து அமைத்து வைக்கப் பெருந்தகை அருந்தித்
தங்கள் செய்கடன் முட்டா வண்ணம் திருப்பணி செய்யும் நாளில்' (பெ.பு. 919).

It is made obvious that the service is a coercive force which attains its wholeness in *nāyaṇmār's* life and religiosity, specifically in its mystical feature; this is a service which is spontaneously at once unconditional, unhindered, unstructured, benevolent and humble which are characteristic of deep devotion. As suggested, the very vision of *Śiva* which so deepened the *nāyaṇmār's* mystical life, far from attracting them to a life of aloofness, asceticism or isolation, plunged them into a greater service of *Śiva* on whom they fixed their eyes with respectful love (PP. 494)⁶²⁰.

It is certain that this religious ideal of service (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*), which was ingrained in the *nāyaṇmār's* religious perception and consciousness, moved these Tamil spiritual giants to consider all forms of service to *Śiva* (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*) and His devotees (தொண்டர்: *tonṭar*) as a form of worship. No worship or devotion, however magnanimous is imaginable without service. *Cēkkiḷār* was keen to instil this ideal of service. It is highlighted in the phrase: 'I shall recount the glorious service rendered by those devotees' (PP. 349)⁶²¹. The ideal of service is portrayed in distinct form; it is deeply embedded in all of the narration of the *Periya Purāṇam* from the beginning to the end. Indeed the entire narration of the life of the *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* depicts their mystical experience as based and founded on 'service' (*tonṭu*: தொண்டு). It is for this reason *Cēkkiḷār* exclaims that the religious expression of these spiritual leaders can only be explained in terms of service (*tonṭu*: தொண்டு) as in 'The History of the Holy Servants'

⁶²⁰ '...சிவனார் செய்ய கழல்பற்றி எப்பற்றினையும் அறஎறிவார் எல்லை தெரிய ஒண்ணாதார் மெய்ப் பத்தர்களால் பரிவுடையார்...' (பெ.பு. 494).

'...he was devoted to the feet of the Lord and to the loving service of his devotees' (PP. 494)

⁶²¹ '...எம்பிரான் தமர்கள் திருத்தொண்டகு ஏத்தல் உறுகின்றேன்' (பெ.பு. 349).

(திருத்தொண்டர் புராணம்: *tirut Toṇṭar Purāṇam*) of the Lord (PP. 10)⁶²²: for the glory of *Śiva* (PP. 3278)⁶²³ and as a service performed in obedience to the *arul* (grace) of *Śiva* (PP. 3651),⁶²⁴ in self-abnegation and in denial of self-centredness (PP. 1194),⁶²⁵ in seeing *Śiva* who dances at the court (PP. 3269).⁶²⁶ *Cēkkiḷār* uses the term service as a nuanced theological term; it is portrayed as more than a mere external action or activity. It has an inner, mystical dynamism; it absorbs the person at all levels, irrespective of caste difference; it has a mystical orientation in the light of religious expression, commitment and experience.

This imagery of service – as a comprehensive reality of service to *Śiva* – sparkles clearly in the life of the *nāyaṇmār*. The pilgrim poets, like a candle light guiding them in different ways yet inexplicably unseen, on their unique journey of service, when the *nāyaṇmār* moved from sacred shrine to shrine, glorifying *Śiva* (PP. 1445),⁶²⁷ and addressing the anxieties, miseries and turmoil in the life of the people whilst forming

⁶²² ‘...திருத்தொண்டர் புராணம் என்பாம்’ (பெ.பு. 10).

⁶²³ ‘...உருகும் அன்பால் பொருப்பரையன் மடப்பாவை இடப்பாலனைப் போற்றிசைத்துப்...’ (பெ.பு. 3278). ‘... He entered the temple and with heart melting with love worshipped and served the Lord singing endless praise’ (PP. 3278).

⁶²⁴ ‘...எனக்கு அப்போது இதுநிகழ்ந்தது அவர்அருளே என்று அதுவே தொண்டாக என்றும் அதுசெய நினைந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 3651).

‘... He came to the conclusion that what had happened was the working of God’s grace and accordingly determined to continue the practice as his particular form of service’ (PP. 3651).

⁶²⁵ ‘...மனம் முதலாயின மூன்றும் அண்ணலார் சேவடியின் சார்பு ஆக அணை விப்பார் புண்ணிய மெய்த் தொண்டர் திருக்குறிப்பு அறிந்து போற்றும் நிலைத் திண்மையினால் திருக்குறிப்புத் தொண்டர் எனும் சிறப்பினார்’ (பெ.பு. 1194).

‘... Because of his ability to serve the servants of the Lord by discerning their wishes before they were expressed, he earned the name “the Lord’s servant who picked up hints” (PP. 1194).

⁶²⁶ ‘... விரவுமெய் விருத்தி பெற்றார் ... காவிஅம் கண்டர் கூத்துக் கண்டு கும்பிடுவது என்று...’ (பெ.பு. 3269).

‘... He possessed the true wealth which consists in a life of loving service ... he wanted to see the divine dance in the sacred court to offer service’ (PP. 3269).

⁶²⁷ ‘...புரியா நின்றவர் தம்மைப் பணிந்து தமிழால் பின்னும் போற்றல் செய்வார்’ (பெ.பு. 1445).

‘When he entered the town, he sang another hymn of praise in pure Tamil ... then he continued to worship’.

strong friendships and communality (PP. 1469-1480)⁶²⁸. They performed miracles (PP. 2214-2230)⁶²⁹ and restored the natural order (PP. 1515-1532)⁶³⁰ wherever primeval righteousness was lacking. As, Peterson notes, as ‘first leaders’ they gave ‘coherent and powerful expression to their experience of God in all the places familiar to Tamil devotees of *Śiva*’ (1982, p. 72) unifying the Tamil country into a ‘sacred geography where everything else has meaning with reference to something else’ (1982, p. 74).

At the beginning of the narration of the life of *Tirunāṇṇacampantar*, *Cēkkiḷār* construed the ideal of service in much the same way as that of a divine consort, *Umā*, might have perceived of her service to the *Śiva*; ‘looking at the weeping child with compassion, the Lord instructed his consort whom all the worlds adore to give him milk to drink’ (PP. 1969)⁶³¹. “‘Drink this” she said, as she wiped the tears from his eyes and

⁶²⁸ In this narration *Cēkkiḷār* describes *Tirunāvukkaracar*’s encounter with renowned devotee *Appūti*, their friendship and companionship.

⁶²⁹ It should be pointed out that in the *Periya Purāṇam* the power of miracle in the *nāyaṇmār*’s life is seen as springing from the *nāyaṇmār* hymns themselves; their poems of praise of *Śiva* are the channels of miracles and active agents of *Śiva*’s *arul*. In the narration of the miracle of the temple door, one of the events to which *Cēkkiḷār*’s alludes to in his hagiography, the *nāyaṇār* i.e. *Tirunāvukkaracar* sings a hymn, making the closed door of the temple to open, so that those gathered in the temple might delight in seeing *Śiva* for which they have gathered there. But then the time comes to close the door again, *Campantar* out does *Tirunāvukkaracar* by causing the door to shut with a single verse of hymns (PP.1533-1560). The *nāyaṇmār*’s hymns have the power to cause supernatural events, but in this case the efficacy arises not from occult powers but from the intensity of their devotion, their relationship to *Śiva* himself, embodied in the hymns. It is intensity of devotion that too stirs *Śiva* to respond to his, or the community’s need, overturning the laws of nature in favour of the devotee’s interests. This appears to be the principal motif of the miracles *Tirunāvukkaracar* performs when the Jains tortured him. *Campantar* too performs a number of miracles against acts of his Jain opponents as narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam*. However, what should be pointed is that this type of miracle derives its meaning from a context of sectarian rivalry in which consecrated power of the *Śiva*, the *nāyaṇmār*, and their sacred songs are proven to be superior to the ‘black magic’ of heretical sects. The extraordinary devotion to *Śiva* manifested in their immensely powerful songs, nowhere is more vividly presented than in the narratives of the miracle of healing and raising of the dead (PP. 2214-2238).

⁶³⁰ This is made clear in the narration of the famine at *Tiruvīlimilalai* where the two *nāyaṇmār* i.e. *Campantar* and *Tirunāvukkaracar* offered a garland of praise at the feet of the Lord imploring His assistance. It is narrated that in consequence of their plea, the Lord bestowed on them enough to spare. Twice a day they made a public announcement for people come and eat what the Lord had provided in this way, they distributed food and relieved the hardship of those in want.

⁶³¹ ‘அழகின்ற பிள்ளையார் தமைநோக்கிஅ அருள் கருனை எழுகின்ற திருவுள்ளத்து

put into his hands the golden cup. Thus, the Lord who is the father of all, in his grace comforted the weeping child' (PP. 1971)⁶³². In addition, *Cēkkiḷār* narrates 'by virtue of his gift, the child came to be called "the child who is *Śiva*'s possession"... the one uniquely endowed with divine wisdom, wisdom which breaks the cycle of rebirth' (PP 1972-1974)⁶³³. In reply, *Cēkkiḷār* suggests, that the child began to sing the greatness of the Lord and to yield benefit to all, who dwell on earth and made pilgrimages singing the gloriousness of divine service (PP. 1976-1979). His whole ambition was to serve *Śiva* – the Lord and His devotees.

Cēkkiḷār, later narrates, that the *nāyaṇār*, after having the experience of being possessed by the Lord as His 'servants' (*tonṭar*: தொண்டர்) or 'slaves' (*aṭiyār* : அடியார்) went onto worship and serve *Śiva* (PP. 2003).⁶³⁴ When the Lord of heaven saw the child singing his praise, He graciously bestowed on the child divine *aruḷ* (grace): it was *Śiva* who would specify and show the places of the child's pilgrimage. The child concluded this as the will of *Śiva* (PP. 2045)⁶³⁵. This child experienced an even more

இறையவர்தாம் எவ்உலகும் தொழுகின்ற மலைக்கொடியைப் பார்த்தருளித் துணைமுலைகள் பொழிகின்ற பால்அடிசில் பொன்வள்ளத்து ஊட்டுஎன்ன' (பெ.பு. 1969)

632 'எண்அரிய சிவஞானத்து இன்அமுதம் குழைத்தருளி உண்அடிசில் எனஊட்ட உமைஅம்மை ஏதிர்நோக்கும் கண்மலர்நீர் துடைத்தருளிக் கையில் பொன்கிண்ணம் அணித்து அண்ணலை அங்கு அழகை தீர்த்து அங்கணனார் அருள்புரிந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 1971).

633 '...ஆளுடைய பிள்ளையாராய் ... தாவுஇல்தனிச் சிவஞான சம்பந்தர் ஆயினார்'... '... சிவஞானம் பவம் ஆதனை அறமாற்றும் பாங்கினில் ஓங்கிய ஞானம்...' (பெ.பு. 1972-1973).

The expression 'ஆளுடைய பிள்ளையாராய்' connotes the process of becoming a servant of *Śiva* and also being enslaved by Him.

634 '...தாதையா ரையும்வெளியே தாங்கு அரிய மெய்ஞானம் தம்பால் ...

மேதகைய அருள்பெற்றுத் திருக்கோலக் காஇறைஞ்ச விரும்பின் சென்றார்' (பெ.பு. 2003)

'There he offered worship to God who is father and mother, who fed him with divine wisdom. Having received their grace, he set out ... to adore and serve' (PP. 2003).

It should be noted that the term *aṭiyār* used here stem from the word *aṭi* (அடி: a foot, base or bottom) and denote a slave of *Śiva*.

635 '...பரவுதிருத்தில்லை நடம்பயில்வாரைப் பணிந்துஏத்த விரவிஎழும் பெருங்காதல் வெள்ளத்தை உள்ளத்தில் தரஇசையும் குயிப்பு அயியத் தவமுனிவர்க்கு அருள் செய்தார்' (பெ.பு. 2045).

uncompromising conversion through divine wisdom (*Śiva-jñānam*: சிவஞானம்)⁶³⁶ and guidance and the child came to an awakening that there was yet a more flawless, a more loving way of serving *Śiva*: From then on, the child embarked on journey of incredible religious service. This was to travel from sacred shrine to sacred shrine, temple to temple, sacred place to sacred place singing the inexplicable service to the Lord. On this pilgrimage, the child, who had drunk the milk of divine wisdom, began to realize what it meant to pursue oneself, in the unreserved service of *Śiva* and that is to be at his humble service in the fullness of life. Thus, *Cēkkiḷār* remarks, that the child began to sing; “you have bestowed upon me the inward experience of bliss, endless and divine”, “it has come in visible form easy to apprehend with the senses ... this hymn of the child begins with the words ‘through sacred learning and the tending of the sacred fire’, they, “the devotee at *Tillai* offer special service to the Lord” (PP. 2065)⁶³⁷.

Cēkkiḷār narrates from that instant, the child would deliberate all thoughts and desires on travelling to varying places to spread this ideal of service (PP. 2245)⁶³⁸. However, his pilgrimage was not without turmoil because he had to endure and protect himself from the winter cold (PP. 2236-2244)⁶³⁹, summer heat (PP. 2282-2301)⁶⁴⁰,

‘... an overwhelming desire arose in his heart to worship the Lord ... he concluded that this must be the will of God ...’ (PP. 2045)

⁶³⁶ ‘...ஆளுடைய பிள்ளையாராய் ... தாவுஇல்தனிச் சிவஞான சம்பந்தர் ஆயினார்’...

‘... சிவஞானம் பவம் ஆதனை அறமாற்றும் பாங்கினில் ஓங்கிய ஞானம்...’ (பெ.பு. 1972-1973).

⁶³⁷ ‘ஊழிமுதல்வர்க்கு உரிமைத் தொழில் சிறப்பால் வாழித்திருத்தில்லைவாழ் அந்தணரை முன்வைத்தே ஏழிசையும் ஓங்கஎடுத்தார் எமை ஆளும் காழியர்தம் காவலனார் கற்றாங்கெரி ஓம்பி’ (பெ.பு. 2065).

⁶³⁸ ‘தொழுதுபுறம் அணைந்து அங்குநின்று ஏகிச்சுரர் பணிவுற்று எழுதிரு வாலந்துறை திருச்செந்துறையே முதலா வழுவில் பலகோயில்கள் சென்று வணங்கி மகிழ்ந்து அணைவார் செழுமலர்ச் சோலைத் திருக்கற்குடி மலைசேர வந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 2245).

‘On the completion of his worship, *Campantar* left the temple and set out once more. He visited *Tiruvālanturai*, *Tiruccenturai* and many other temples as well ... at each offered service ...’ (PP. 2245).

⁶³⁹ *Cēkkiḷār* describes that the weather in the surrounding hills turned cold, and the season of the early dew set in. This was the season for the cold North wind to prevail. While this child of true wisdom was staying

famine (PP. 2465-2475)⁶⁴¹, face a contest of water with the *Jains* (PP. 2698-2755)⁶⁴² and a conflict with Buddhists (PP 2805-2830), nor was it limited to a particular time, temple, place or shrine. His conscious effort was to show fidelity to the *Śiva*, by doing service to Him and His devotees. It is against this background that one needs to understand the miracles that were performed by the *nāyaṇār* i.e. healing of the chieftain's daughter by *Tiruñāṇacampantar* (PP. 2214-2230)⁶⁴³, reliving the distress of the people caused by famine (PP. 2465-2475), opening the temple door at *Maṛaikkāṭ* (PP. 2476-2520)⁶⁴⁴ and all of his service to the people. At the end of the narration of the life of *Tiruñāṇacampantar*, *Cēkkiḷār* elaborates, 'I have recounted the history of *Campantar*, the repository of pure Tamil' (PP. 3159)⁶⁴⁵, 'he walked around in the beauteous light of the Lord and became one with the Lord' (PP. 3156)⁶⁴⁶. It is clear, that through the narration of the life of *Tiruñāṇacampantar*, *Cēkkiḷār* wants to emphasize the inspiration of the life

at *Koṭimāṭac Ceṅkunrūr*, his companions became fearful that they would fall prey to the local epidemic of fever, by the reason of their prolonged stay in the country. Accordingly they approached *Campantar* and made known to him their fears. In response, he first invoked the grace of God. That very day the fever epidemic abated and disappeared, not just in that town itself, but throughout the whole country.

⁶⁴⁰ While *Campantar* was enjoying his stay at *Valaṅcuḷi*, the bright sun etered the sign of Gemini and shed abroad its burning rays with such a vengence that the waters of the seven seas began to dwindle. In that hot summer season, there was no relief from the burning heat of the sun. It was during this time the child born at *Canpai* offered worship to the Lord at *Valaṅcuḷi*. At that instance to provide relief from the heat of the summer sun, heavenly attendants of *Śiva* brought a pearl entrusted canopy to set up over the head of the master of the three kinds of Tamil.

⁶⁴¹ In those days, the land was afflicted by a drought. This caused great concern to *Aracar* and the child whose lips had tasted the milk of wisdom from the breast of *Pārvati*. He prayed to the Lord, eventually the time came for rain to return.

⁶⁴² This contest with *Jains* and the conflict with *Buddhists* are sufficiently dealt with, in chapter four of the thesis pages 105-111.

⁶⁴³ In a town there lived a chieftain called *Kolli Maḷavaṇ*, who had an unmarried daughter. She was afflicted with a kind of chronic epilepsy which had proved incurable. This caused her father such sorrow that he was in despair. So to find some relief from his sorrow, he took the girl to the temple of the Lord, and laid her there before the divine presence. At that moment, *Campantar* to rid the girl of her disease sang in Tamil a hymn of protest to the Lord. When he finished singing his hymn and concluded it with auspicious invocation, at once the daughter of the chieftain was healed of her sickness.

⁶⁴⁴ It is narrated that *Campantar* went to the temple at *Maṛaikkāṭ* and approached the golden entrance to the inner shrine, where once the Vedas had offered worship and then sealed the doors. In consequence, from that day forward an entrance constructed on one side of the building had been in use. So the devotee pleaded the Lord and at last the seal was broken and the doors opened.

⁶⁴⁵ 'அருந்தமிழாகரர் சரிதை அடியேனுக்கு அவர் பாதம் தரும்பரிசால் அறிந்தபடி...' (பெ.பு. 3159).

⁶⁴⁶ '...போதநிலை முடித்தவழிப் புக்கு ஒன்றிஉடன் ஆனார்...' (பெ.பு. 3156).

of the *nāyaṇmār* was one of a dynamism of service; it was a significant mystical expression, existentially expressed in a life of pilgrimage.

The vision of pilgrimage can provoke different interpretations. In its literal sense, as Peterson points out, it can mean the idea of a ‘journey’ or of ‘being there at the destination, the desired place’ (1982, p. 71). The *nāyaṇmār*’s purpose of such journeys is ‘their intense desire to experience *Śiva* in all his variety ... [in] specific places and forms; and to express this experience at its fullest, by singing of it in the same, specific, concrete terms’ (Peterson, 1982, p. 73). Similarly, pilgrimage can also be conceived, in a symbolic way, to a journey of life through darkness, distress and anxiety into a life of love, bliss and reassurance. It is suggested by Peterson, ‘the travel of the *nāyaṇmār* as expressed in the songs bring together in one framework, the isolated shrines and local mythologies of the region, and thus serve to integrate politically ... and religiously the fragmented landscape of the Tamil country into a unified sacred geography’ (1982, pp. 73-74). One can observe the fact, that in its spiritual meaning, pilgrimage can also mean an inner quest for participation in *Śiva*, the quest for mystical wisdom.

What is significant to observe here is the fact that *Cēkkiḷār* presents the ideal of pilgrimage or journey as an inner advancement or movement. A process or spiritual evolution – where *Cēkkiḷār* presents the life of *Tiruñāṇacampantar* as the history of a pilgrim (PP. 1904-3159), learning as a ‘child possessed by divine wisdom’ (PP. 1972)⁶⁴⁷ and growing into that mystical union with *Śiva* (PP. 3156)⁶⁴⁸ for whom *Śiva* was

⁶⁴⁷ ‘...ஆளுடைய பிள்ளையாராய் ... தாவுஇல்தனிச் சிவஞான சம்பந்தர் ஆயினார்...’

⁶⁴⁸ ‘...போதநிலை முடித்தவழிப் புக்கு ஒன்றிஉடன் ஆனார்...’ (பெ.பு. 3156).

immanently present and leading to the establishment of the *Śiva* faith as against Buddhism and Jainism. This image of pilgrimage became for *Cēkḱilār* an ideal that formed the lives of *nāyaṇmār* into a life of service. The goal of the pilgrimage for the *nāyaṇmār* was to increase and grow into a mystical consciousness and a growth in *Śiva*-awareness and wisdom (*Śiva-jñānam*: சிவஞானம்); it is that kind of unreserved human insight of the self and the *Śiva*-experience ('சிவன்அடியே சிந்திக்கும் திருப்பெருகு சிவஞானம்': *Śivaṇaṭiyē cintikkum tirupperuku Śivañānam*) which *Cēkḱilār* understands as true wisdom of the self or rare *mei-jñānam* ('அரியமெய்ஞ்ஞானம்': *ariyameiñānam*) or true knowledge; this results in the bliss of *mei-jñānam* ('மெய்ஞ்ஞானம்') – awareness and availability for service (PP. 1972)⁶⁴⁹.

Every pilgrimage process as narrated through the life of the *nāyaṇmār* is therefore not only something that is to be accepted and admired, but it is an invitation to assimilate. Only when one is immersed in '*mei-jñānam*' ('மெய்ஞ்ஞானம்')⁶⁵⁰ or 'true understanding of the self' – does one attain true experiential knowledge of oneself from within, and one experiences a process or a movement which *nāyaṇmār* exemplified in their lives. This

'... As he drew near to enter it, all human wisdom was transcended. He entered the light and became one with the Lord' (PP. 3156).

⁶⁴⁹ 'சிவன்அடியே சிந்திக்கும் திருப்பெருகு சிவஞானம்
பவம் அதனை அறமாற்றும் பாங்கினில் ஓங்கிய ஞானம்
உவமைஇலாக் கலைஞானம் உணர்வு அரியமெய்ஞ்ஞானம்
தவம் முதல்வர் சம்பந்தர் தாம் உணர்ந்தார் அந்நிலையில்' (பெ. பு. 1972).

'The wisdom thus imparted on him consists of the wisdom of the Lord *Śiva* which ever meditates upon his feet, the wisdom which breaks the cycle of rebirth, the matchless wisdom of the arts and scriptures, and the true wisdom that is hard to comprehend' (PP. 1972).

⁶⁵⁰ According to the Tamil Lexicon of the Madras University the word *mei* (மெய்) denotes that which is true. The real truth of all reality is highlighted as *meipporu!* (மெய்ப்பொருள்). It also means 'to be true; to be faithful' (உண்மையாதல்: *unmeiyathal*), 'to exhibit one's strength' (ஒருவன் தன் பலத்தைக் காட்டுதல்: *oruvaṇ taṇ palattai kāṭṭutal*). A person who has realised the true of all reality or a person of true spiritual wisdom is spoken as *meijñāni* (மெய்ஞ்ஞானி) and the true knowledge or spiritual wisdom that he poses is spoken of as *meijñānam* (மெய்ஞ்ஞானம்). They, by means of their spiritual wisdom have the ability to speak the truth *mey-kūral* (மெய்கூறல்).

essence of insight has been unfolded in exquisite form by *Cēkkiḷār* in the narration of the life of *Meypporuḷ nāyaṇār* (PP. 467-490). In the narration *Cēkkiḷār* sings: ‘The sole objects of his concern were the devotees of the Lord *Śiva*. Apart from them, he knew no other loyalty...So when any of the saints approached him, he found great joy in giving alms to meet their needs’ (PP. 469-470)⁶⁵¹. At the end *Cēkkiḷār* notes ‘*Śiva* ... stood before the king his servant, and granted him a vision of himself ... He also gave him grace to worship without ceasing, so that the servant might find refuge at his feet’ (PP.489)⁶⁵². Here is an experience of instantaneous perception of the power-centre, *Śiva* in dwelling in one’s consciousness. *Cēkkiḷār* takes one to the core of the *nāyaṇmār*’s self-awareness of *Śiva* as the subject, implying continuous memory - the self-submission to *Śiva* – service i.e. *tonṭu* (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*) and its unstinted devotion. The *nāyaṇmār* represent the collective wisdom and the unfurling of the path of service - dedicated action and conduct. The ‘*mei-jñānam*’ (மெய்ஞ்ஞானம்) or true knowledge of the self leads the *nāyaṇmār* to embrace the life of service in *Śiva*. It was awareness and a unifying consciousness in which the *nāyaṇmār* grew into the reality of *Śiva* and by which they grew into a depth of life and service (PP. 3165).⁶⁵³

The purpose of ‘*mei-jñānam*’ (‘மெய்ஞ்ஞானம்’) was preliminary, to have a mystical knowledge and intimacy with *Śiva*’s *arul* (grace) within oneself, but *arul* (grace) is always from *Śiva*, and is of the self and for the self. It is the experience of the *arul*

⁶⁵¹ ‘... தங்கள் நாயகருக்கு அன்பர் தான் அலால் சார்பு ஒன்று இல்லார்... நாடிய மனத்தினோடு நாயன்மார் அணைந்த போது கூடிய மகிழ்ச்சி பொங்கக் குறைவு அறக் கொடுத்து உவந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 469-470).

⁶⁵² ‘தொண்டனார்க்கு இமயப் பாவை துணைவனார் அவர்முன் தம்மைக் கண்டவாறு எதிரே நின்று காட்சி தந்தருனி மிக்க அண்டவானவராட்கு எட்டா அருட்கழல் நீழல் சேரக் கொண்டு அவர் இடையறாமல் கும்பிடும் கொள்கை ஈந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 489).

⁶⁵³ ‘...போதநிலை முடித்தவழிப் புக்கு ஒன்றிடன் ஆனார்...’ (பெ.பு. 3156).

‘He walked around in the beauteous light of the Lord and became one with the Lord’ (PP. 3156).

(grace) of *Śiva* in its benevolence. The phenomenal reality was a realisation, an understanding that *arul* (grace) is from *Śiva*. This ‘*mei-jñāṇam*’, as narrated in the account of the *meyp̥poruḷ nāyaṇār* (PP. 467-490) contains a significant principle. This is an understanding that human reality is encapsulated in *Śiva*’s *arul* (grace). In this realization, emerges the desire for service. The result of being graced by *Śiva* is radically an inter-personal activity towards him. This makes *Cēkkiḷār* believe that service cannot be forced. It springs from the experience of being one with *Śiva*. It is a growth into a mystical perception and intimacy culminating in service. Living in ‘*mei-jñāṇam*’ (‘மெய்ஞ்ஞானம்’) and engaging in pilgrimage service becomes an outgrowth of right perspicacity. By the intensity of ‘*mei-jñāṇam*’ (‘மெய்ஞ்ஞானம்’), a person possessed of divine knowledge grows in holistic affection or sensitivity and thirsts to have the vision of what the grateful *Śiva* reveals in his immanence and in his work to deliver souls from bondage⁶⁵⁴.

This ideal of service which is a religious expression of the *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* and the mode of praise of this service in *Cēkkiḷār*’s narration is not simply carved onto religious genre but more specifically, it is a natural development from conception about warrior-heroes, kingship and the sacred in early Tamil literature. According to classical Tamil *caṅkam* literature, poetry was organized into two fundamental division, *aham* (அகம்) or ‘interior’, ‘inner/domestic matters’, and *puram*

⁶⁵⁴ In the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Śiva*’s aim is expressed in different, but more or less synonymous, ways: e.g. to free the devotee from bondage (*Ēṇātināṭaṇ* PP. 648), to grant release to his devotee (*Tirunālaippōvār* PP. 1067f), to bestow grace upon him (*Tirukkuṛippu* PP. 1197). In two instances, what might seem a more self-regarding motive is given for the Lord’s testing of his devotees, viz. He wished himself thus to enjoy the proven sweetness of his servant’s love (*Ciruttoṇṭar* PP. 3689, *Atipattar* PP. 4010). It may be no accident that both these accounts involve the devotee making a supremely costly, edible offering to the Lord, in *Atipattar*’s case a fish, *Ciruttoṇṭar*’s the flesh of his own son.

(புறம்) or ‘exterior’, ‘public matters’ corresponding to the categorization of human experience itself. Of the types of poetic genres *aham* (அகம்) or ‘interior’, which are love poems, speaks clearly in abstract types of a love-struggle of the person, rather than historical persons, Tamil landscape in general rather than having its focus on a particular place.

On the contrary to this ‘impersonal’ *aham* (அகம்) poetry, the *puram* (புறம்) or ‘exterior’ categories of poem is more concentrated on historical persons, circumstances in a real society, history, even to the extent of the celebration of historical personages their virtue of heroism, often seen as an act of exemplification of an all-embracing love of family. The act of service to the nation (தேசத்தொண்டு : *tēcattonṭu*) i.e. of the warrior heroes and kings is seen primarily as an act for the intensification of the act of love expressed in domestic living (அகம்படித்தொண்டு : *akampatittonṭu*): their service is embodiment of the unification of emotion and ritual, *aham* (அகம்) and *puram* (புறம்), the experience of love and its expression. To serve, whether in the realm of domestic life or public, is seen as an essential factor to evoke and control ‘an anonymous impersonal power’ (Zvelebil, 1981, p. 21) i.e. *aṇaṇku* (அனங்கு) that seems to have manifested in the cosmos. Kings and women were considered as significant persons who could be possessed by this ‘sacred power’. However, it is the bards who acted as mediators and controllers of the sacred power. The two divisions of *aham* (அகம்) and *puram* (புறம்) were both sacred conditions in which persons were likely to be highly charged with the ‘sacred power’.

Several aspects of the early Tamil conception of the sacred, heroic deeds of warrior-kings and the role of the bards as ‘servitors’ to control these ‘sacred power’ come together in the relationship between *Śiva* and his *nāyaṇmār* as it is narrated the *Periya Purāṇam*. In the narration of the initiation into the *Śiva-tonṭu* (சிவதொண்டு), *Śiva* claims *Campan̄tar* as His ‘slave’ or ‘servant’ (PP. 2003).⁶⁵⁵ In other words, *Śiva* takes possession of His devotees as His servants (*tonṭar*: தொண்டர்). *Cēkkiḷār*’s model for the image of service was the warrior-kings and bards who were considered to be ‘servitors’ who were employed by kings to control the ‘sacred power’ for the proper functioning of society. In the *Caṅkam* literature, the bards sing the heroic deeds and exploits of the warrior-heroes; *Cēkkiḷār* narrates the exploits and the heroic deeds of the *nāyaṇmār*. In this way *Cēkkiḷār* tries to redefine Tamil culture, earlier dominated by the ethos of indigenous warrior-heroes, kings and bards, in terms of devotional service to *Śiva* which the *nāyaṇmār* performed. Hence, *Cēkkiḷār*’s adoption of classical Tamil genre or bard’s praise of warrior-heroes and kings is no more literary borrowing but gives ample insight into the very nature of heroic service and the devotional relationship as conceived by the *nāyaṇmār*.

This, however, did not convey the sense in which the term service was understood in the temple practices at the time of *Cēkkiḷār*. The notion of service was equated with an exclusive form of worship of the temple priest i.e. *Āti Saiva* or *Saiva Brahmins*⁶⁵⁶,

⁶⁵⁵ ‘...தாதையா ரையும்வெளியே தாங்கு அரிய மெய்ஞானம் தம்பால் ...

மேதகைய அருள்பெற்றுத் திருக்கோலக் காஇறைஞ்ச விரும்பின் சென்றார்’ (பெ.பு. 2003)

‘There he offered worship to God who is father and mother, who fed him with divine wisdom. Having received their grace, he set out ... to adore and serve’ (PP. 2003).

⁶⁵⁶ *Cēkkiḷār* notes ‘they offer worship three times a day, never departing from the rules laid down in scripture. These are the members of the *Āti Saiva* caste’ (PP. 4165).

‘எப்போதும் இனியபிரான் இன் அருளால் அதிகரித்து மெய்ப்போது நெறிவந்த விதிமுறைமை வழுவாமே

frequently to their temple-centred ritualism performed according to *Saivāgams*⁶⁵⁷ of southern *Saivism*⁶⁵⁸. The temple priest were a privileged group, as Prentiss notes, the *Saivāgams* invest a certain category of Brahmans with the preeminent role of worship in the temple, where they perform *pūjā* to *Śiva* on behalf of a public audience' (1999, p. 123). Hence, by means of their ritual performance as that which is designated exclusively to their caste they upheld the primacy of these *āgamic* rituals and the norms of social classification (*varṇa*) to determine ones suitability to access God in the temple which is a central concern in the story of *Tirunāḷaippōvār* as presented in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 1046-1082)⁶⁵⁹.

This aspect of the temple priest's 'ritual reaction of service to the embodied image have since been known technically as *seva* [service], which in this sense is a liturgical term, referring to the ceremonial worship of the deity' (Gold, 1995, p. 240). Though

அப்போதைக்கு அப்போதும் ஆர்வம்மிக்கும் அன்பிராய் முப்போதும் அர்ச்சிப்பார் முதல்சைவர் ஆம்முனிவர்' (பெ.பு. 4165).

⁶⁵⁷ It is narrated by *Cēkḷilār* that these priests offer 'regular personal service to the Lord and conduct worship three times a day... the prerogatives of these *Saiva* Brahmins (PP. 4166).

‘தெரிந்து உணரின் முப்போதுசெல்காலம் நிகழ்காலம் வருங்காலம் ஆனவற்றின் வழிவழியே திருத்தொண்டின் விரும்பிய அர்ச்சனைகள் சிவவேதியர்க்கே உரியானஅப் பெருந்தகையார் குலப்பெருமையாம் புகழும் பெற்றியதோ’ (பெ.பு. 4166).

There two types of *āgamic* worship that can be observed here: (i) regular personal service (ii) conduct of worship for other done three times a day.

⁶⁵⁸ *Āgamic Śaivism* could be classified into two branches: Southern *Śaivism* and Northern *Śaivism*. These convenient appellations do not indicate the birthplace of the two schools, but the country where they finally took root.

⁶⁵⁹ It is narrated that *Aathanoor* was a very fertile village and very thickly populated. However, at the very out-skirts of the village, close to the paddy fields, was a colony of people who dealt with carcasses of animals. In these wretched surroundings dwelt a strange person. He was filled with a rapturous to the anklet-grit feet of the Lord *Śiva*. He adopted the profession hereditary to his caste, and with an ideal of leading a righteous life he transformed his profession itself into an act of service to God. However his lowly birth in terms of caste prevented him from entering the temple at *Tillai*. He would only stand at the gates of temple and on account of excess devotion used to dance and sing in praise of the Lord. The Lord *Śiva* desirous of enabling the *nāyaṇmār* whose vision was obstructed by *nandi* made the *nandi* lying before him to move to one side and manifested himself to His devotee. At the end it is also narrated though the temple priest did not approve of his presence at the temple vicinity, Lord *Śiva* prepared the circumstances for the devotee of the Lord to enter the temple precincts and to worship the dancing Lord. The temple priest residing at *Tillai* also accompanied him.

‘conceptually distinct from worship yet often conflated with it, is *seva* or service’ (Kuiper, 2011, p. 101). It is carried out ‘to keep the gods beneficially inclined ... performing *seva* is good for the soul of the server’ (Kuiper, 2011, p. 101). Service (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*), then, is perceived as a contrary vision or cognitive phenomenon; it is another way of interrelating with the object of one’s love - in this instance God through ritualism. While vision or contemplation implies to an extent, a sense of assimilation of the knowledge of the ‘sacred power’, one may call it a passive experience; service demands sacrifice – the devotee’s activity is of a very physical nature, in involves one’s own personal self in love and devotion. As, Richard Davis points out, ‘a proper *Saivāgama* should stand on four feet (*pāda*): the feet of knowledge (*jñāna*), ritual action (*kriyā*), proper conduct (*caryā*), and disciplinary practice (*yoga*)’ (1992, p. 107). However, what is observable is that the emphasis placed on the ‘temple priests’ as ones who ‘conducted worship never departing from the rules laid down in scripture’ (PP. 4165) indicate that they concentrated on ritual action (*kriyā*: கிரிகை) as a pathway to God. The role of knowledge (*jñānam*: ஞானம்), proper conduct (*caryā* :சரிகை) and disciplinary practice (*yōga*: யோகம்) towards liberation held a subordinate position to ritual.

In contrast by foregrounding the classical Tamil concept of the ‘sacred power’ domiciling in Tamil region, the body-space and by integrating and idealizing the two inherent aspects of service i.e. *aham* (அகம்) or contemplative love and *puram* (புறம்) or active service as exemplified by the warrior-heroes and bards in the life of the *nāyaṇmār* and by establishing these notion of service (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*) as fundamental to realize *Śiva* within and become *Śiva*, *Cēkkiḷār* sets forth a new path of access to God that

eliminates caste elitism and that shatters the primacy of ritual in the stereological domain. This is clearly evident in the classification of service performed by the *nāyaṇmār*, as wild devotees or *vaṇṭoṇṭar* (வன்தொண்டர்) and mild devotees or *meṇṭoṇṭar* (மென்தொண்டர்). The mild devotees or *meṇṭoṇṭar* (மென்தொண்டர்) are described as persons who serve the Lord at the temple, never once contravening the laws set by tradition especially the *Āgamas*: ‘... they have set their heart on *Śiva*. These are they who by their service have attained the feet of the Lord...’ (PP. 4162).⁶⁶⁰ The wild devotees were considered as those who transgress or go beyond set the patterns of tradition so as to seek and serve the Lord. The wild devotee is the companion of the Lord (PP. 317-318)⁶⁶¹. The two aspects, however, are merged in *Śiva* who is an archetypical Lord and servant; he is the end of the mystical quest (PP. 4163-4164)⁶⁶².

What is noteworthy is that the life of wild devotees or *vaṇṭoṇṭar* (வன்தொண்டர்) or harsh devotees are mentioned at great length and are more common in the *Periya Purāṇam* than the narration of mild devotees or *meṇṭoṇṭar* (மென்தொண்டர்). In the story of *vaṇṭoṇṭar* (வன்தொண்டர்), after elaborating the early life and the background of the

⁶⁶⁰ ‘ஈசனையே பணிந்து உருகிஇன்பம் மிகக் களிப்புலய்திப் பேசினவாய் தழுதழுப்பக் கண்ணீரின் பெருந்தாரை மாசுஇலா நீறுஅழித்து அங்கு அருவிதர மயிர்சிலிர்ப்பக் கூசிய உடல் கம்பித்திருவார் மெய்க்குணம் மிக்கார்’ (பெ.பு. 4162).

⁶⁶¹ ‘... திருத்தொண்டர் தம்பிரான் தோழனார் நம்பி என்றாள் ...என்றஉரை கேட்டலுமே எம்பிரான் தாமரேயோ என்ன முன்னம் வன்தொண்டர் பால்வைத்த மனக்காதல்...’ (பெ.பு. 317-318).

‘He is known as the companion of the Lord...when *Paravaiyār* heard this she mused, “so he is the one who is called the companion of the Lord”. Before the words could pass her lips, love for the *vaṇṭoṇṭar* welled up in her heart beyond all bound’ (PP. 317-318).

⁶⁶² ‘அருஆகி உருஆகி அனைத்தும் ஆய்நின்றபிரான் ... திருக்கணத்தார் பெருக்கிய சீர்த்திருஆருர்ப் பிறந்தார்கள் ஆதலினால் தருக்கிய ஐம்பொறி அடக்கி மற்று அவர்தம் தாள்வனங்கி ஒருங்கினை நெஞ்சுஉடையார்க்கே அணித்துஆகும் உயர்நெறியே’ (பெ.பு. 4163-4164).

‘The Supreme Lord is all things. He is without form and yet has form...those who were born there perform service that lies beyond all comprehension...they have subdued their five senses, concentrated their minds upon a single point and offer worship at his feet’ (PP. 4163-4164).

nāyaṇmār and their virtues, *Cēkkiḷār* focus on ethical and emotional turmoil that serves as decisive moment of the deeds of services of the *nāyaṇmār*, generally comprising the *nāyaṇmār*'s encounter with *Śiva*. In these narrations, a swift series of acts and event, harsh and violent deeds ultimately results in the vision of *Śiva* and the *nāyaṇmār* achieve their goal of being with *Śiva*. Thus, most of the narratives end at a point of climax, the wondrous nexus between the *nāyaṇmār* heroic deed and *Śiva*'s response, in the form of benevolent self-revelation⁶⁶³. What is even more remarkable in the narrations is that the wild devotees or *vaṇṭoṇṭar* acts of devotion are essentially acts of sacrifice of the most gruelling kind⁶⁶⁴. To show their devotion to *Śiva*, the *nāyaṇmār* gave up without reluctance what they held most dear to them – their life itself in *Śiva-toṇṭu* (சிவதொண்டு).

⁶⁶³ This is made clear in the narration of the life of *Iyarpakaiyār* (PP. 404-439). True to his name, the *nāyaṇmār* was totally out of tune with the world of fleeting delights. He fixed his liberated mind and gaze on *Śiva*. Domestic felicity was a marked feature of the Hindu way of life and the *nāyaṇār* enjoyed the companionship of a loving and devout wife. This *Saiva* family had made it a golden rule to feed those hungered whenever they knocked at their doors, as well as showed utmost deference and hospitality to those devotees who renounced worldly ties in order to set up *Śiva* in the domain of their hearts. One day, when an imposing pilgrim clad with the insignia of holy ash and beads and matted hair turned up to as a favour, the *nāyaṇār* welcomed his guest with due deference. It came to pass that the renunciate made a strange request and asked for his wife. Even though it seemed an extraordinary alms-giving to a world-detached *nāyaṇmār* acquiesced and gave him permission to take his wife. The stranger further wished that his host should accompany him to the outskirts of the village, so that he was not attacked by the villagers for taking his wife away. So the *nāyaṇār* kept company with remarkable calmness, he returned home after having parted from his loving wife and never did he turn back to have a last look. There was no mesmerism at work. He was free from the desires of the senses. The absence of reflection was a sign of grace. The *nāyaṇār* vindicated that the feeling of 'I' and 'Mine' and waned before the all-powerful love of *Śiva* to whom belonged everything. In serving a servitor of *Śiva*, *Iyarpakaiyār* testified to his total surrender and this realised the bliss of oneness with *Śiva*.

⁶⁶⁴ The *nāyaṇmār* who exemplified this intense devotion are listed here according to the types of act and service they did: (i) Injury or death of to oneself out of service to *Śiva*'s devotees: for example *Eṇātināṭaṇ* showed faithfulness to the ashes and beads that *Śiva*'s devotees wore (PP. 608-649); (ii) injury or death to oneself out of service to the *līṅga*: for example *Mūrtti nāyaṇār* (PP. 973-1021); (iii) injury to oneself and one's kin out of service to the devotees of *Śiva*: for example *Amarnīti nāyaṇār* (PP. 507-554); (iv) injury to oneself and one's kin out of service to the *līṅga*: for example *Caṇṭēcurar* (PP. 1211-1270); (v) killing one's kin out of service to the devotees of *Śiva*: for example *Iyarpakaiyār* (PP. 409- 444); (vi) injury or killing non-kin out of service to the devotees of *Śiva*: for example *Catti* (PP. 4044- 4050); (vii) injury or killing non-kin out of service to the *līṅga*: for example *Erpiattar* (PP. 555-612).

This they did in a violent manner or one may point out heroic way of sacrifice and service (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*): this sacrifice and service is feet of physical and moral bravery. Those most striking feature of the *nāyaṇmār*'s sacrifice is, apart from demands imposed on the physical self of the *nāyaṇmār*, is the way it exemplifies the ideal of service as passionate act of love or *aṇpu* (அன்பு): the word *aṇpu* (அன்பு) is presented here in sense of desire to do deeds of love for *Śiva* ceaselessly, it really indicates the deep devotion of the *nāyaṇmār*. This *aṇpu* (அன்பு) itself is attachment (*paṭtru*: பற்று), affection (*nāsam*: நேசம்), benevolence (*karunai*: கருனை), piety (*pakti*: பக்தி), joy (*inṇam*: இன்பம்) and most specifically deep contentment. The *nāyaṇmār*'s commitment to *Śiva-tonṭu* (சிவதொண்டு) gives life-fulfilling contentment joy (*inṇam*: இன்பம்) and takes precedent over worldly attachments. The *nāyaṇmār* carries the *Śiva-tonṭu* (சிவதொண்டு) so unflinching in a manner that exemplifies extreme rather than constrained love to an extent that can only be viewed heroic, fanatical and fierce. They portray *nāyaṇmār*'s quality of attachment to *Śiva* and His *Śiva-tonṭu* (சிவதொண்டு) or service to *Śiva*.

The narration of the life of the *Kaṇṇappar* is the persuasive example of the *nāyaṇmār*'s sacrifice made out of intense love of *Śiva* as presented in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP 650-830)⁶⁶⁵. The story points to the fact in the intensity of love bring transformation to the *nāyaṇmār*'s ordinary nature and life. For example, *Cēkkiḷār* describe that when *Kaṇṇappar* saw *Śiva* on mount *Tirukkālatti* his feeling of joy and love grew more intense spontaneously, overcome with longing he ran forward in haste and embraced *Śiva*. His appearance changed into the image of measureless love. 'I am his

⁶⁶⁵ For the life story of this *nāyaṇmār*, see p. 50.

servant, and I found him here’ the *nāyaṇār* exclaimed (PP.755)⁶⁶⁶. Further *Cēkkiḷār* narrates that ‘*Śiva* in his *arul* (grace) looked with favour upon him, at once freed from the entail of previous sins, he was transformed into the image of matchless love, abiding in the shade of heavenly light’ (PP.753)⁶⁶⁷. This makes clear that the by benevolent gazing of *Śiva* the *nāyaṇār*’s individual nature as a hunter was transformed into the image of love and he received *Śiva*’s nature; the *nāyaṇār*’s hunter identity was only a means through which love for *Śiva* was expressed, a love for *Śiva* who was now part of the *nāyaṇār*. This love, as *Cēkkiḷār* narrates, welled up with great intensity – ‘his devotion to the Lord did not allow him to leave the Great One on his own’ (PP. 759)⁶⁶⁸. This fanatical devotion made his fellow hunters believe that he had gone completely mad caught by some divine frenzy and they had no idea how to cure him (PP. 768-769): *Śiva* has ‘enslaved’ (தடுத்தாட் கொள்ளல்: *taṭuttāṭ koḷḷal*) the *nāyaṇār* completely out of the practices that make up a community of the hunters. The narration also reveals, that *aṇṇu* (அன்பு) surpasses learning and ritual purity, it is a single minded devotion to *Śiva* is the ultimate necessity.

The narrations also reveal that not only the *nāyaṇār* was ‘enslaved’ (தடுத்தாட் கொள்ளல்: *taṭuttāṭ koḷḷal*) by *Śiva*, the Lord *Śiva* himself was captivated by the *nāyaṇār*. Hence *aṇṇu* (அன்பு), it may be pointed out, is an emotion that *Śiva* and the *nāyaṇār* shared in common. At the end of the narration *Cēkkiḷār* narrates to show the *nāyaṇār*’s great love, *Śiva* created a circumstance that allowed the *nāyaṇār* to express his love to the

⁶⁶⁶ ‘...அடிய னேற்கு இவர் தாம் இங்கே அகப்பட்டார் ...’ (பெ.பு. 755).

⁶⁶⁷ ‘திங்கள்சேர் சடையார் தம்மைச் சென்று அவர் காணாமுன்னே அங்கணர் கருணை கூர்ந்த அருள் திருநோக்கம் எய்தத் தங்கிய பவத்தின் முன்னைச் சார்பு விட்டு அகல நீங்கிப் பொங்கிய ஒளியின் நீழல் பொருளில் அன்பு உருவம் ஆனார்’ (பெ.பு. 753)

⁶⁶⁸ ‘...ஆரா அன்பில் ... அவ் அண்ணலைப் பிரிய மாட்டா அளவுஇல் ஆதரவு நீட’ (பெ.பு. 759).

excessive, but the Lord could not fathom such an extreme deed of act the *nāyaṇār* performed to express his love. Finally, *Śiva* responds in his boundless *arul* (grace) inviting the *nāyaṇār* to ‘Take the place at His right hand’ (PP. 834)⁶⁶⁹. *Śiva* and the *nāyaṇār* share *aṇpu* (அன்பு) in common. *Aṇpu* (அன்பு) as sharing and a longing for participation in *Śiva* accounts for fanatical devotion of the *nāyaṇmār*. Their acts or the services they performed are not simply of their own; they are deeds of *Śiva* and they discloses his true nature – a nature which emerges as fanatical or mad. It is this experience of being ‘captured’ and ‘enslavement’ (தடுத்தாட் கொள்ளல்: *taṭuttāṭ koḷḷal*) by *Śiva* makes the *nāyaṇmār* perform all sorts of service to Him. Hence, as Hudson notes, ‘by virtue of love for *Śiva*, the *nāyaṇmār* are extensions of *Śiva*’ (1989, p, 385).

The holistic concept of service (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*), where both *aham* (அகம்) and *puram* (புறம்), inner and outer contemplation and action were fused together to reiterate one’s instinct for service (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*) and see the Lord in service (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*). In this, *Cēkkiḷār* demonstrates that the vision of seeing and being at ‘one’ with *Śiva* is not merely far reaching philosophically or theologically, but the state of being one with *Śiva* shows it has a social consequences. In this perspective, it is precisely in and through action or service towards other devotees, that one opens oneself to *Śiva*. Therefore, a significant aspect of the mysticism in the *Periya Purāṇam* arises from seeking the vision of *Śiva* and this implies seeing him participating in the lives *nāyaṇmār*, and one’s participation in it. *Cēkkiḷār* draws attention, as seen in the sixth chapter, to this theological understanding by suggesting that *Śiva* is the creator, preserver and is at work to deliver the soul.

⁶⁶⁹ ‘...என் வலத்தில் மாறு இலாய் நிற்க ...’ (பெ.பு. 834).

The practicality of the theology of service is to denote that it is *Śiva*-knowledge that fills the self of a person as a result of contemplation of the mysterious power of *Śiva's aruḷ* (grace) symbolized by the lotus feet of the Lord. It is this pure awareness that led the *nāyaṇmār* to engage in their service (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*). The life of a person who is conscious of this presence of *Śiva* is not just intellectual, but is one of an expansive life and one that is lived out in the fundamental awareness of *Śiva's aruḷ* (grace). This is the reason in the *Periya Purāṇam* that the author is primarily concerned with service not with an abstract principle. The lives of the *nāyaṇmār* are examples of the progressive realisation of the true knowledge of self and service. They stand as a catalyst of contemplation, intuition and will transform into a natural experience and action. The progressive assimilation of true knowledge of the self by divine *aruḷ* (grace) is the soothing characteristic of the *Periya Purāṇam*. It is for this reason *Cēkkiḷār* considers the *nāyaṇmār* as 'heroic soldiers' contrary to the misinterpretation of the term as 'violent'. They manifest the splendour of life lived in the presence of *Śiva*.

7.3 The Motivation for Service in the *Periya Purāṇam*

The inclination for service (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*) in the *Periya Purāṇam* is universal and is not restricted to humans alone. This is stated in the narration of the life of the *Kōccenkaṭ Cōḷa purāṇam* where the story is related of service of a wise spider which spun a sturdy web of fine thread as a canopy over the Lord's golden head, to protect him from the rays of the sun and falling leaves (PP. 4202-4219)⁶⁷⁰. In fact, for *Cēkkiḷār* all that is on earth are incessantly occupied in the service of the Lord i.e. *Śiva-tonṭu* (சிவதொண்டு), as all are believed to be domiciled by *Śiva*, no one can earn the *aruḷ* (grace) of endlessly being in

⁶⁷⁰ For the story of this *nāyaṇār*, see p.144.

him without service (PP. 4154-4159)⁶⁷¹. This makes clear, though the motives that inspire humans to engage in service vary in general, e.g. sensitivity to human needs, mercy and compassion towards other devotees, in *Cēkkiḷār's* thought the motivation for service is intrinsic to *nāyaṇmār's* perception, in which *Śiva* domiciles as the soul of their soul and self of their very self, as *arul* (grace) and is receptive to being nurtured or suppressed.

The key principle, however, is the intuitive and mystical awareness and the mystical experience of the unity of life with *Śiva*, through *Śiva*, in *Śiva* and for *Śiva* and in the unity of all and it is a reflection of him labouring in manifold manifestations for the deliverance of the soul (PP. 648)⁶⁷². This mystical experience, awareness, the fundamental oneness of all phenomenal reality, enables the *nāyaṇmār* to take on and live a life of intentional simplicity, humbleness in service and poverty in self-sacrifice. It is voluntary (PP. 4199)⁶⁷³.

⁶⁷¹ 'With love and joy they delight in worshipping the Lord his servants ... those who serve the Lord with the intention of making all their actions worthy of his lotus feet, will not return to the womb to be reborn. The world itself is too small to contain their glory. Having ears for nothing but the stories of *Śiva* and love for nothing else but him, they have won the right to gain his lotus feet. There are the men and women of true integrity, whose delight it is to serve God with a melting heart. Whether they stand or sit, lie or walk, eat or sleep, with their eyes open or closed, they never forget his dancing feet. Those are genuinely his servants never slacken in their awareness of the Lord' (PP 4154-4159).

⁶⁷² மற்று இனிநாம் போற்றுவது என் வானோர் பிரான் அருளைப்
பற்றவர் தம் கைவாளால் பாசம் அறுத்தருளிப்
உற்றவரை என்றும் உடம்பிரியா அன்பு அருளிப்
பொன் தொடயான் பாகனார் பொன்னம்பலம் அணைந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 648).

'What more can we say in praise of his ineffable grace? To sever the bonds of attachment, he made use of the sword in the hand of one who owed him no loyalty. To the one who looked to him for help, he granted the privilege of being with him forever in love that knows no parting...' (PP. 648)

⁶⁷³ 'ஆங்கவர் மனத்தின்செய்கை அரனடிப்போதுகடகுஆக்கி ஓங்கிய வாக்கின் செய்கை உயர்ந்த
அஞ்செழுத்துக்கு ஆக்கி தாங்கு கைத்தொழிலின் செய்கை தம்பிரான் அடியார்க்கு ஆகப்
பாங்குடை உடையும் கீளும் பழுதில் கோவணமும் நெய்வார்' (பெ.பு 4199)

'Dedicating his thoughts to the flower feet ... his words to the five letter prayer and his works to the servants of the Lord, he used to weave clothes ... when the servants of the Lord came to him, he would invariably give them...' (PP. 4199).

The *nāyaṇmār* cultivated a steadfast devotion with their self-knowledge and in elegance expanded their spiritual essence of this knowledge as unifying which is not forced from outside but is based on self-knowledge of *Śiva* domiciling in the cosmos and Tamil region. With this understanding, *Cēkkiḷār* takes one to the essence of the *nāyaṇmār*'s mystical awareness of *Śiva*, meaning an uninterrupted vision; this is the total self-surrender to *Śiva* to be in his service (PP. 336)⁶⁷⁴. What is clear and important is the fact that the *nāyaṇmār*'s fundamental insight into reality involves *Śiva* domiciling in the Tamil region. The lives of these *nāyaṇmār* give a profound confirmation in *Śiva*-faith, such that it elevates one to a higher level of mystical awareness and active service and – because of what is experienced; one notices a sense of the transforming power of *arul* (grace). Indeed, throughout the narration of the lives of the *nāyaṇmār*, *Cēkkiḷār* refers back to this experience of the *nāyaṇmār* as the foundational experience and motivation for service (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*). This mystical experience, in fact, can and should be considered as a particular intensification of the ordinary life of the *Śiva*-faith, that is sensitive to *Śiva* domiciling in the Tamil region, rather than as a radically different form of ordinary living.

The mystic experience of being one with *Śiva*, often realised through introverted contemplation, can be realised here and now. However, this inner spirit of mystical reverence of devotional contemplation which is experienced is constantly strengthened through service (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*). The inner affective knowledge of the Lord is not

⁶⁷⁴ 'அடியவர்க்கு அடியன் ஆவேன் என்னும் ஆதரவு கூரக் கொடி நெடுங் கொற்ற வாயில் பணிந்து கைகுவித்துப் புக்கார் கடிக்கொள் பூங்கொன்றை வேயந்தார் அவர்க்கு எதிர்காணக் காட்டும் படி எதிர்தோன்றி நிற்கப் பாதங்கள் பணிந்து பூண்டு' (பெ.பு. 336).

This *Cēkkiḷār* notes 'having bowed before the entrance, with his hands together in worship, he entered the sanctum. At that moment the Lord appeared in visible form and stood before him' (PP. 336).

simply a love of the Lord but it is a profound insight into *Śiva*, not a simple knowledge but a dynamism of service in its manifold expressions. This affirms that the knowledge of knowing the Lord alone is insufficient for liberation, the bliss of serving the Lord which is the ultimate goal, has to be first manifested in the life of service to Him. The quest of the *nāyaṇmār* to have a vision of *Śiva* in the cosmos, is fundamentally an outlook on life driven by the desire and ‘heroism’ to serve, to place one’s self at the feet of the Lord (PP. 4162, 4165, 4167)⁶⁷⁵.

It is clear in the hagiography *Cēkkiḷār* rarely focuses his attention on love (*anpu*: அன்பு) alone; his constant emphasis is on service (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*). However it is significant, that *Cēkkiḷār* is keen to highlight the crucial fact that the compelling vigour or principle behind the morals of service is love – love which is specially directed towards the feet of the Lord i.e. love of *Śiva* (*Śiva* - *anpu*: சிவ அன்பு) and then because it is an affective movement, it is also directed at the service of *Śiva* devotees (*Śiva-tonṭu* : சிவ தொண்டு). It is stated ‘their life is the life of worship and penance, offered in love to the feet of the Lord’ (PP. 352)⁶⁷⁶. At the very end of the hagiography, *Cēkkiḷār* reiterates ‘as their bliss grows ever more intense, with hearts inspired they love the only Lord. So the celestial glory of the servants of the Lord, who dwell in the golden court, everywhere abodes throughout the entire world’ (PP. 4286-4287). It shows that service which is

⁶⁷⁵ ‘...தாரணையால் சிவத்து அடைந்து ... அடித்தொண்டின் வழி அடைந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 4162).
‘... ஆவார்மிகும் அன்பிராய் முப்போதும் அர்ச்சிப்பார் முதல்சைவர் ஆம்முனிவர்’ (பெ.பு. 4165).
‘...கசிந்துசிந்தை பூரணத்தால் முழுநீறு பூசிவாழும் புனிதர் செயல்அறிந்தவர் புகலல் உற்றேன்’ (பெ.பு. 4167).

‘They have set their hearts on *Śiva* ...and by their service have attained the feet of the Lord’ (PP. 4162).
‘...their love and zeal never waver. According to the scriptures, regular personal service to the Lord and the conduct of worship ... are the prerogative of these saints’ (PP. 4165). ‘Now to the best of my knowledge I shall recount the deeds of the holy men who with a melting heart wear the holy ash throughout their lives’ (PP. 4167).

⁶⁷⁶ ‘...ஆற்றினார் பெருகும் அன்பால் அடித்தவம் புரிந்து வாழிவார்’ (பெ.பு. 352).

offered to *Śiva* flows out of love. It opens new pathways to God. It is remarkable that this motif of service is intermingled with love. *Śiva* of this *nāyaṇmār* is not just an awesome Lord; He and the *nāyaṇmār* are bound to each other by a power of mutual love.

The life affirming principle of love i.e. love of *Śiva* (*Śiva-anpu*: சிவ அன்பு) is found in the narration of the life of *Viṇaṇmiṇṭar nāyaṇār purāṇam* (PP. 491-501). Significantly he writes: ‘into the *Vēlālar* family of that town, *Viṇaṇmiṇṭar* was born. Above all else, he was devoted to the Lord *Śiva*, and to the loving service of devotees. He showed his devotion by visiting the shrines of the Lord to offer worship. He would first pay respect to the servants of the Lord who were gathered there to offer worship at the Lord’s feet’ (PP. 494-495). By this, *Cēkkiḷār* affirms that mystical love is primarily a mystical intimacy with *Śiva* and it is found in deeds rather than words. *Cēkkiḷār* stresses humble service as the dynamic expression of the love of *Śiva*, one that is based on activity rather than merely a passive response - the theme is interwoven through the hagiographical narration of the lives of the *nāyaṇmār*. Indeed, for *Cēkkiḷār*, love is the force of service that fires the *nāyaṇmār* with a thirst to serve. The voluntary service is an outward expression of the inner mystical reality of oneness.

It is clear that this love (*Śiva-anpu*: சிவ அன்பு) which ignited the *nāyaṇmār* in service cannot be enforced. It is evoked or stirred. It emerges, moved by divine *aruḷ* (grace) active in them, from one’s inner self. One has to realize that *Śiva* labours in the *nāyaṇmār*, and this realisation itself comprises a primary force within them. This allows one to do service at the feet of the Lord and of what otherwise would have been unthinkable. To be in *Śiva*, is to abide in him. This inner force evolves into its own

contemplation in service. Hence, one has to realize that his energy should be possessed by the knowledge of the grace working in oneself. The purpose of this knowledge is not a simple understanding, but a knowledge that goes beyond itself and overflows into a conscious decision and direction in one's life.

What emerges is the fact that there is a certain unity in three inner moments in self – interior knowledge (*mei-jñānam*: மெய்ஞானம்), love (*aṇpu*: அன்பு) and service (*tonṭu*: தொண்டு) that comprise the desired end of the contemplation of the *aruḷ* (grace) of *Śiva*. They are the single thread of an interpersonal surrender to the Lord's presence serving him endlessly. Just as 'interior knowledge' (*mei-jñānam*: மெய்ஞானம்) does not flow in love (*aṇpu*: அன்பு) would not be an inner experience, so love (*aṇpu*: அன்பு) that does not exemplify in service (*tonṭu*: தொண்டு) would be deceptive. It is for this reason *Cēkkiḷār* accentuates an intrinsic unity between love (*aṇpu*: அன்பு) and service (*tonṭu*: தொண்டு), knowledge and activity which shaped the ideal of and primary objective of the *Periya Purāṇam*. Just as love did not predispose knowledge but contemplates it, so service did not tap the inner vitality and contemplative love, but fulfilled them within an ordinary human mode of living. Hence, *Cēkkiḷār* declares that to receive divine grace (*aruḷ*) consciously, with inner illumination and understanding, the love of the servants of the Lord is induced into an incorporated all-embracing service (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*), which fills the saint's life. Thus it is a life of service which is rooted in a way of life (PP. 555-557)⁶⁷⁷.

⁶⁷⁷ *Karuvūr* was surrounded by walls embellished with gold, which even the gods admired, and in the town there was temple called "Āṇilai", where the Lord made his abode, just as forever he abides in the hearts of the loving devotees. In order to dispel illusion, *Eṇipattar* used to worship the holy one in that temple, and to perform acts of service for those who belonged to the dark-throated Lord. When anything

In all, what is obvious is the fact, of the twofold unity in the love of *Śiva* (*Śiva-anpu*: சிவ அன்பு): (i) integral to *nāyaṇmār*'s religious ethos is the true inner knowledge of *Śiva* (*mei-jñānam*: மெய்ஞ்ஞானம்), love (*anpu*: அன்பு) and service (*tonṭu*: தொண்டு) in complete surrender to *Śiva*; (ii) within this lies the profound truth of being in *Śiva*'s service (*Śiva-tonṭu*: சிவதொண்டு). Nowhere is the motif of service so beautifully narrated than in the *Kaliya nāyaṇār*'s life episode (PP. 4027-4043)⁶⁷⁸. At the end of the narration, *Cēkkiḷār* emphasizes, that when he was no longer able to serve the ruler of the gods by lighting up the temple lamps, *Kaliya nāyaṇār* performed the heroic deed of cutting his own throat.

7.4 The Varieties of Service in the *Periya Purāṇam*

In order to highlight his mysticism of service and morality, *Cēkkiḷār* emphasises varieties of service that are discernible in the life of the *nāyaṇmār*. In his account of the *Tirukurippu Tonṭar*, *Cēkkiḷār* comments:

untoward happened to any of the devotees, he would come on the scene like a lion from a lair. Then to advance the *Śaiva* religion throughout the world, he would wield his axe and rid them of their trouble (PP 555-557).

On another occasion it is narrated: 'As soon as he reached the age of discernment, his great love of the Lord governed all his thoughts and actions. Even in the moment of forgetfulness, his mind would harbour no other thought ... he stood fast in the path of service at the Lord's feet' (PP 1057).

⁶⁷⁸ *Kaliya nāyaṇār* was born in the city of *Tiruvorriyūr* in a clan which was known for its oil trade. Although he owned immeasurable wealth, he followed the way of service to the Lord. While he faithfully engaged in service, in his grace the Lord determined to make known to the world what his virtuous servant was doing. Accordingly, in due time, He made *nāyaṇār*'s wealth disappear. However, even after his wealth was exhausted, this great devotee did not stop serving the Lord with distinction. In desperation, he even sold his house, to serve the Lord by providing oil to the temple, but the proceeds of that venture too went up in smoke. When he was penniless, he even thought of selling his wife. In his wildest dreams he had not imagined that the day would come when he would be unable to perform his service in the temple, but now there was no more choice. He went to the temple for the lightening of the lamp. There he determined that if the flame of the lamp should die, he too would end his life. With that thought in mind, he arranged the lamps in a row and set their wicks. Since he had no oil, he intended to fill them with his own blood. So he took a knife and slashed his throat. At that moment, the Lord in his abundant mercy intervened and stayed his hand. The Lord granted him grace to abide in his beautiful city in the eternal bliss of serving him (PP. 4027-4043).

There was once a man living in this city who was washer-man by birth. He was of a loving disposition, and steadfast in the path of virtue. By family tradition he was a servant of the Lord ... since his earliest days he had dedicated himself, in thought, word and deed to the feet of the Lord. Because of his ability to serve the servants of the Lord by discerning their wishes before they were expressed, he earned the name “*Tirukurippuṭ Tonṭar*” i.e. “the Lord’s servants who picked up hints” (PP. 1193-1194).

This makes clear that services to the Lord could be done in various ways. *Cēkkiḷār* classifies the *nāyaṇmār*’s service in a threefold manner; these are through one’s thoughts or mind, through one’s body or deeds and through material means of wealth. This concept of service presents an ideal model for the *nāyaṇmār* to follow. This is evident, in the life of *Tirukurippuṭ Tonṭar* (PP. 1082-1210)⁶⁷⁹. He devoted physical exertion for the comfort of the servants of the Lord; ‘he delighted in serving the devotees whose hearts melted with love on hearing the name of their Lord, and by washing their clothes’ (PP. 1195)⁶⁸⁰. Further it is stated; the ‘*nāyaṇār* had the ability to serve the servants of the Lord by discerning their wishes before they were expressed’ (PP. 1193)⁶⁸¹, implying that they were always in his thoughts. *Cēkkiḷār* explains that the *nāyaṇār* would spend all of his material wealth to comfort the servant: when the *nāyaṇār* saw the servant of the Lord approaching, he was very pleased and he went out to meet him. Then he spoke to him in a kindly manner, ‘Sir, why have you grown thin?’ (PP. 1200)⁶⁸² and asked him to enter his home. It is noted that this service of the *nāyaṇār*, whenever it is done to someone, is

⁶⁷⁹ For the life of this *nāyaṇār*, see 149.

⁶⁸⁰ ‘... ஊர் ஒலிக்கும் பெருவண்ணார் என ஒண்ணா உண்மையினார் ... நிலா முகிழ்க்கும் திருமுடியார் பேர் ஒலிக்க உருகுமவர்க்கு ஒலிப்பர் பெருவிருப்பினோடும்’ (பெ.பு. 1195).

⁶⁸¹ ‘...சேவடியின் சார்பு ஆக அணை விப்பார் புண்ணிய மெய்த் தொண்டர் திருக்குறிப்பு அறிந்து போற்றும் நிலைத் திண்மையினால் திருக்குறிப்புத் தொண்டர் எனும் சிறப்பினார்’ (பெ.பு. 1193)

⁶⁸² ‘...திருமேனி இளைத்தது இருந்தது ஏன் என்று கைதொழுது ...’(பெ.பு. 1200).

offered to the Lord himself who dwells in them: when the Lord saw the service which his servant performed for his devotees, he came to bestow his grace upon him (PP. 1209).⁶⁸³

In the *Periya Purāṇam*, service through mind or thought, primarily implies, to evoke, love, contemplate or reflect on *Śiva* by reciting and repeating *Śiva*'s name. Though, *Śiva* has manifold names in the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkkiḷār* portrays the *nāyaṇār* and other adherents of remembering the Lord *Śiva* with a Five-Letter-Prayer i.e. by the name of *Śiva* - *Na Ma Si Va Ya* (PP. 84).⁶⁸⁴ When humans are bound to the rock of impurity by the chains of deeds, both good and bad, they sink in an ocean of rebirths, the Five-Letter-Prayer will release them. So now it raised *Tirunāvukkaracar* from the sea and set him on the path of wisdom (PP. 1400).⁶⁸⁵ On another occasion it is narrated 'that the Lord's Five-Letter-Prayer was the source of all the original mantras (PP. 2169)⁶⁸⁶. 'He pointed the way for all to follow by singing the *Na Ma Si Va Ya* hymn ... path of true wisdom to all mankind and he sang for all to hear' (PP. 3151)⁶⁸⁷. It is clear from these citations from the *Periya Purāṇam* that in practice the recitation of the Five-Letter-Prayer takes two forms. One is, in the participation of the community through common worship, recital or singing the Five-Letter-Prayer where the community seeks a unity with *Śiva*.

⁶⁸³ '...நீயும் இனி நீய நம் மன் உலகு பிரியாது வைகுவாய் என அருளி அந்நிலையே எழுந்தருளி அணி ஏகாம்பரம் அணைந்தார்' (பெ.பு 1209).

'We have made known to the world how great is your devotion', the Lord declared. "From now on you shall dwell forever in my eternal world"' (PP. 1209).

⁶⁸⁴ '...ஓதிய எழுத்துஆம் அஞ்சும் உறுபணி வரத்தாம் அஞ்சும்' (பெ.பு. 84).

'The Five Letter Prayer is on the lips of all. Disease does not dare to show his face' (PP. 84).

⁶⁸⁵ 'அருள் நயந்து அஞ்செழுத்து ஏத்தப் பெற்ற அக் கருணை நாவரசினைத் திரைக்க ரங்களால் தெருள் நெறி நேர்மையில் சிரத்தில் தாங்கிட வருணனும் செய்தனன் முன்ப மாதவம்' (பெ.பு. 1400).

'Out of his deep grace, *Tirunāvukkaracar* had sung the praise of the Five Letter Prayer ... the Lord now raised him from the sea ... and set him on the path of wisdom...' (PP. 1400).

⁶⁸⁶ '...அந்தியின் உள்மந்திரம் அஞ்செழுத்துமே என்று அஞ்செழுத்தின் திருப்பதிகம் அருளிச் செய்தார்' (பெ.பு. 2169).

⁶⁸⁷ 'ஞானமெய்நெறிதான் யார்க்கும் நமச்சிவாயச் சொல்ஆம் என்று...' (பெ.பு. 3151).

The other is, in private recital or meditation, with or without beads. These two methods are not mutually exclusive to each other. The communal recital of the name of the Lord is as important as is meditation in solitude.

What is important is that for *Cēkkiḷār*, the simple recitation of the Five-Letter-Prayer is not sufficient. The *nāyaṇmār*'s desire was to have the vision of *Śiva*. In another hymn *Cēkkiḷār* describes the life of the *Pūcalār nāyaṇār* as a classical example of service through thought or mind (PP. 4176-4193)⁶⁸⁸. The story of *Pūcalār nāyaṇār* indicates that service through one's thoughts or mind lies profoundly in the giving of one's entire thoughts to the Lord for the benefit of the *Śiva*-community and His devotees. It consists in thinking about the elimination of all that distracts oneself of thinking of *Śiva*. Service through one's mind is motivated not only by seeking opportunities of serving the Lord in times of adversity, but it is primarily by cultivating an attitude of compassion and deepening one's fidelity to the service of the Lord *Śiva* and His devotees.

It has to be noted that their service through one's body means a practical physical action, the performance of which is associated with temples or helping all who need assistance, shelter or protection. The simplest form of that service is one which establishes a mystical intimacy with *Śiva*. This is recounted in the *Periya Purāṇam* as

⁶⁸⁸ For the advancement of the Vedic tradition, a man was born in that town whose thoughts and feelings were all focused on the feet of the Lord. He never deviated from the path of devotion, and as he grew, his love grew within him. He held that to render service to the devotees of *Śiva* was his proper course, so he collected money from whatever source he could and distributed it to them. Beyond that, this devotee cherished the intention of building a temple as a dwelling place for the Lord. However, he did not take into account the fact he never had the money to achieve that goal. Hence, he decided that a temple built by means of his spiritual awareness would serve as well. So that it is what he did. It turned out to be a very fine temple too. In his mind, he looked for craftsman and their equipment, settled on an auspicious day to begin the building work, and laid the foundations. With loving devotion he continued his work throughout the night without sleep. When the king heard this he was astonished. "What a wonderful man!" he cried, "he has a mind free of all imperfection!" (PP. 4176-4193).

hospitality; it was a community duty that had its origination in Tamil tradition. As observed, in the second chapter, *Cēkkiḷār* draws on *Tirukkural*, to idealize the *nāyaṇmār*'s spirit of service. It was their understanding that the primary duty of a householder was to be at the service or to offer hospitality to those who took refuge with them. Hospitality was inseparable from the *nāyaṇmār*'s Tamil identity, tradition and spirituality and this practice was holistic and central to the *nāyaṇmār*'s mystical ethos. It was more than a warm reception – it was about treating the visitor as a whole; the very act of hospitality with its various dimensions of preparation of food and the provision of clothing was carried out in sacredness, establishing a mystical wholeness between the sacred and the act of hospitality. It established in the spirit of *Śiva*, a reverence and respect for both guest and host.

Cēkkiḷār imparts significance to this hospitality in the narration of the *nāyaṇmār*'s all-embracing metaphor with theology. He describes the nature of *Śiva* can be well illustrated as hospitality. He moulds this metaphor in the mutuality and unity that exists between *Śiva* and *Umā*, in collaborating in the work of deliverance of the *nāyaṇmār* from bondage (PP. 1969-1974). He advocates an understanding that the essence of *Śiva* is imaged or mirrored in hospitality. The interconnection between the *nāyaṇmār*'s restorations to their true nature in *Śiva* is also made clear by this metaphor of hospitality. It leads the *nāyaṇmār* to the acknowledgement of *Śiva*'s invitation to partake in His self. Thus, it is stated that the *nāyaṇār* exclaimed that: 'By honouring me with your visit, you

have rescued me from the deep trouble that beset me. Please come now, your meal is served' (PP. 463)⁶⁸⁹.

In a number of places *Cēkkiḷār* gives examples of hospitality. The story of *Kalikkampa nāyaṇār* feeding the devotees of the Lord is one such example (PP. 4017-4026)⁶⁹⁰. In fact, in showing hospitality to such a visitor, one serves not the visitor but *Śiva*. This is the ideal of service demonstrated in the *Periya Purāṇam*. *Cēkkiḷār* further stresses this in the narration of the life of *Māraṇ* of *Ilaiyāṅkuṭi* (PP. 440-466)⁶⁹¹. This episode demonstrates the true nature of service to *Śiva* that is done without any desire of an immediate reward, in humbleness and humility, with reverence and love, and with a pure intention and in utter self-abnegation. This mystical experience of hospitality is not carried out in a spirit of detachment, but in a genuine spirit of endless service to the Lord.

⁶⁸⁹ 'அமுந்திய இருள் நீங்கி அடியனேன் உய்ய என்பால் எழுந்தருள் பெரியோய் ஈண்டு அமுது செய்தருள்க என்று...' (பெ.பு. 463).

⁶⁹⁰ In the narration *Cēkkiḷār* relates that one day, as was his custom, the *nāyaṇar* was preparing to feed the devotees who had gathered in his house. At that moment, among the devotees there came forward a man who had once been a servant in the saints' house, but had subsequently fallen out with him and left his employment. He had become a servant of the Lord, and was wearing the garb of a devotee. As the master of the house took this man's feet in his hand and washed them, his wife recognized the guest as the man who had gone off and refused to work for them. As soon as this occurred, she stopped pouring the scented water from the pot. Then, looking at his wife, and embarrassed by what his wife had done, the *nāyaṇār* washed the feet of the former servant thinking of him as if he was the Lord *Śiva* himself that had appeared before him. After that incident, this great servant of the Lord persevered faithfully in the path of service, and finally attained the shade of the Lord's feet in the company of his devotees.

⁶⁹¹ *Māraṇ* was from a family of the lower caste. Yet, his mind was firmly set on performing loving service to the servants of the Lord. Whenever, any friends of the Lord came to his door, he would greet them with affection. In the course of time by divine will, his wealth gradually diminished. Although, he went through severe hardship, he sold his possessions to enable him to persevere in his sacred service as before. As this was going on, the Lord approached the *nāyaṇār's* house in the guise of an ascetic. It was a night in the rainy season. *Māraṇ* had locked the door and lay awake, feeling hungry and improvised. Nevertheless, he got up to greet his guest. In order to satisfy the hunger of his visitor and finding nothing to feed him, he went to the field to gather the paddy seedlings that he had planted that morning, to make food for his visitor. He realized that he had no firewood to prepare the food, so he cut down the rafters of the roof of his house. Once again, there was no curry to serve with the paddy food so he rushed to the garden to pull the immature vegetable plants to serve his guest. On seeing the generosity of the heart of the *nāyaṇār*, and on seeing him engage in the service of hospitality in a time of adversity, the Lord blessed him saying: 'for the service that you have offered, come with your wife to the world above, there you may enjoy the eternal bliss'

Such is the ideal of and spirit of service, as recorded in the episode; it stands as the pathway to liberation. As *Cēkkiḷār* acclaims; ‘the Lord blesses them with the felicity which they deserved and departed from their sight’ (PP. 466)⁶⁹².

It is important to record that *Cēkkiḷār* was always keen to illustrate the life of the *nāyaṇmār* who even went to extremes in their service of hospitality in the cause of *Śiva*. It is against this background that one has to understand the narration of the life of *Iyaṛpakaiyār nāyaṇār* who went to the extreme of offering his wife to a guest, who was none other than the Lord himself under concealment (PP. 404-439). In a similar manner, *Ciruttoṇṭar* in giving up his only son at the persistence of the divine guest (PP. 3665-3752) and of *Eṇātināṭaṇ* who willingly gave himself up, out of his respect to *Śiva*, to be killed by a rogue soldier who came in disguise to kill him (PP. 608-649). These events have traditionally been understood to depict the ‘violence’ of devotion that is performed by the *nāyaṇmār*; rather they should be interpreted as the outpouring of a single minded service to the Lord who seems to dwell in the inner life of the cosmos.

Cēkkiḷār gives examples of yet another manner or type of service that is based on material prosperity or wealth. This aspect of service also forms an integral part of the *Periya Purāṇam*’s ideal of service. For example, *Tirunīlakaṇṭa Yāḷppāṇa nāyaṇār* glorifying the Lord by playing the flute (PP. 4220-4231), the story of the *Nēca nāyaṇār*, who was born in the weaver caste, rendering his service to the devotees of the Lord by placing his head beneath their feet (PP. 4197-4201), the story of *Maṅkaiyarkkaraci*

⁶⁹² ‘இப்பரிசு இவர்க்குத் தக்க வகையினால் இன்பம் நல்கி முப்புரம் செற்றார் அன்பர் முன்பு எழுந்தருளிப் போனார் அப்பெரியவர் தம்தூய அடிஇணை தலைமேல் கொண்டு மெய்ப்பொருள் சேதி வேந்தன் செயலினை விளம்பல் உற்றேன்’ (பெ.பு. 466).

Ammaiyār of guiding the *Pāṇṭya* monarch in the spiritual path (PP. 4194 -4196), and the episode of *Muṇaiyaṭuvār* distributing to the servants of the Lord all the spoils, which he won by the conquest of his foes in battle (PP. 4094-4099). What is even more striking is the depiction of the life of *Vāyilār nāyaṇār* (PP. 4084-4093)⁶⁹³ and the remarkable respect that *Cēkkiḷār* pays to the *Caṭaiya nāyaṇār* (PP. 4232)⁶⁹⁴ and *Icaiṇāṇi Ammaiyār* (PP. 4233)⁶⁹⁵. The story of *Icaiṇāṇi* makes clear that though *Cēkkiḷār* considered even menial work and the humble service that parents perform in raising their children to the path of true life are a service rendered to the Lord. By sanctifying ordinary work that one performs in life as a path for mystical experience, *Cēkkiḷār* establishes the religiosity of service. This was an ideal almost foreign to the Tamil medieval community.

In the *Periya Purāṇam* each *nāyaṇār* emerges with distinct personality. The other acts of service include, apart from what is mentioned above, practical services or manual labour such as digging wells near temples, gathering flowers, tending lamps, providing sandalwood and other materials required for the worship; some of the other *nāyaṇmār* performed acts of service at the shrine, sweeping the temple premises, and attending to the needs of those devotees who frequented the shrines. The emphasis is that these modes of services encompasses and signify meanings and reward of service, of discipline and

⁶⁹³ In commenting on the life of *Vāyilār nāyaṇār* (PP. 4084-4093) *Cēkkiḷār* points out that he was the saint who was well known for his zeal and devotion which he showed in sacred service of the Lord. By the power of his extraordinary concentration, he established a temple for the Lord within his own heart. In it, he lit the lamp of consciousness in God. His unfailing joy was the water which he used for ritual oblation, and the food he offered to the Lord was the nectar of his love. This was a service which for many years this holy devotee offered to the Lord with constant love in the temple of his heart. At length he found refuge in worship at the feet of the Lord.

⁶⁹⁴ *Cēkkiḷār* recounts that 'our Lord *Nampi Ārūrar* was the bosom friend of *Cēramāṇ Perumāl*. He also became the companion of the Lord ... *Caṭaiya nāyaṇār* was *Nampi's* father and thereby conferred a blessing on the world' (PP. 4232).

⁶⁹⁵ Further it is stated that *Icaiṇāṇi Ammaiyār* (PP. 4233) was the wife of *Caṭaiya nāyaṇār*, whose fame is imperishable, and mother of *Nampi*, the servant of the Lord.

knowledge mainly through their depiction of exemplary life of *nāyaṇmār* in personal and emotional terms rather than in terms of their proper behaviour. For *Cēkkiḷār* they are true ‘devotees’, ‘servants’ or ‘salves’ of *Śiva* either by serving the Lord *Śiva* directly or by His devotees. For example *Cēkkiḷār* beautifully portrays how the *Pāṇṭya* queen and her minister humbled themselves in the service of *Śiva* and His devotees (PP. 4074-83, 4194-96): they reveal their passionate, all-consuming, personal love of *Śiva* in its absolute sense. It certain occasions the *nāyaṇmār*’s great act of service and their act of love was brought to light to the world by *Śiva* himself as one sees in the *Kaṇṇappa nāyaṇār Purāṇam*. Therefore, the values of service is measured not just by the status or caste of the person performing such services or acts but the utter sincerity and passion with which it is performed.

It is for this *Cēkkiḷār* adopts different narrative strategies to retell the story of these *nāyaṇmār*. In some instance *Cēkkiḷār* uses short biographies of between fifteen stanzas to narrate about the *nāyaṇmār*. In the short space allotted to them, he says very little about these *nāyaṇmār*, except briefly to describe in very general terms the nature of the service which they performed, without recording any special event of particular significance. As example the narrative of the *Cuntarar*’s parents *Caṭaiyaṇār* and *Icaiṇāṇiyar* (PP. 76-77). In some other instance *Cēkkiḷār* uses biographies of varying length, from only seven or eight stanzas up to a maximum of over sixty, Each of these include by way of introduction a description of the general character of the *nāyaṇmār*’s service then goes on to recount a particular crisis or turning point in their career upon which their fame came to be based. The story usually ends with the saint being transported to the bliss of *Śiva*’s heaven. For several of these crisis was brought about

when their money ran out, and they could no longer perform the service to which they were committed. In order to continue their work, they had then to resort to exceptional measures, for example *Mūrkkar* who turned to gambling (PP. 3623-3634), *Naminati* who lit the lamps first with grass then with his own hair (PP. 4060-4068). Different to what is mentioned, in some other instances, *Cēkkiḷār* begins the biographies the *nāyaṇmār* with the general statement concerning the *nāyaṇmār*'s chosen form of service and go on to describe the occurrence of a particular crisis in their life and the manner in which the saint overcame it. However, in this group of stories, the significant difference is that the crisis recorded as being directly occasioned by the deliberate intervention of *Śiva* himself. *Śiva* intervenes explicitly in order to make known to the world the true merits of the *nāyaṇmār*'s service and love. For example in the case of *Māraṇ* of *ḷaiyāṇkuṭi* whose hospitality to *Śiva*-devotees seemed initially dependent upon his considerable wealth, the Lord plans to demonstrate that the *nāyaṇār*'s zeal for service was in no way limited by the depth of his bank balance (PP. 450)⁶⁹⁶.

In *Cēkkiḷār*'s perspective, therefore, *nāyaṇmār*'s lives demonstrate a single-minded and unconditional service of life and devotion. In his hagiography, he expresses his desire that this life of service becomes well known throughout the world. He proclaimed that 'as their bliss grows ever more intense, with hearts inspired by love of the only Lord. So the celestial glory of the servants of the Lord, who dwells in the golden court, everywhere abides throughout the world' (PP. 4286)⁶⁹⁷. Therefore, for those who

⁶⁹⁶ 'நமக்கு முன்பு இங்கு உணவுஇலை ஆயினும் இமக்கு லக்கொடி பாகர்க்கு இனியவர் தமக்கு நாம்இன் அடிசில் தகவுஉற அமைக்கு மாறு எங்ஙனே அணங்கே என' (பெ.பு. 450).

⁶⁹⁷ 'என்றும் இனபம் பெருகும் இயல்பினால் ஒன்று காதலித்து உள்ளமும் ஓங்கிட மற்று உளார் அடியார் அவர்வான்புகழ் நின்றது எங்கும் நிலவி உலலோத்' (பெ. பு. 4286).

desire that mystical intimacy with the Lord and who labour, serving him and him alone is one sublime path. This service rendered in whatever form may vary but it is all in the service (*tonṭu*: தொண்டு) of *Śiva*.

7.5 Summary

The subject of the *Periya Purāṇam* deals with the relationship of *Śiva* and the *nāyaṇmār* and elucidates the lives of these *nāyaṇmār* or servitors of *Śiva* who not only lived for Him but adored Him in delightful and distinct ways in their historic, social and religious settings. They are identified in the *Periya Purāṇam* as *Śiva-tonṭar* (சிவ தொண்டர்) i.e. ‘servitors of *Śiva*’ or *Mei-tonṭar* (மெய் தொண்டர்) i.e. ‘votaries of truth’. These *nāyaṇmār* pursued the path of *Śiva*-realisation through dedicated activities of love and devotion to *Śiva* and to His devotees implying all works as service of *Śiva*. However, each of the *nāyaṇmār* praised in the *Periya Purāṇam* made their journey in his own fashion, making it look as if it is a unique manner of treading the path.

What must be observed is the fact that it is power and efficacy of single-minded love for *Śiva* that made them wake up to such acts of service: in this they gain not only *Śiva-jñānam* (சிவஞானம்), the supreme knowledge of *Śiva*, but also *mei-jñānam* (மெய்ஞானம்) the true knowledge their self. Therefore, to be a ‘servant’ (தொண்டர் - *tonṭar*) of *Śiva* is to commune with Him through love; to be a ‘servant’ is also to express the love that is within. It is a devotion which is not only is an alert to the private, inner nature of human religious experience; it is at the same instance, the most vigorously expressive kind of personal devotion.

It is, therefore, presented in the *Periya Purāṇam*, the service of the *nāyaṇmār* which they rendered in love of *Śiva* and His devotees is an expression of the familiarity born out of that experience of being in love with *Śiva*. At the same time, the narrations in the *Periya Purāṇam*, also presents *Śiva* as domiciling in the Tamil region and who intervenes out of His love for His devotees in manifold forms, as beggar, ascetic which alters radically the sensitivity of the *nāyaṇmār*'s desire to service. Therefore, their affection, interior knowledge and pilgrimages that they undertook played a significant role in discerning the hospitable *Śiva* who invited them to participate in his transforming love and to co-mingle with him freely in the formation of community based on that mystical love.

It is for this reason; *Cēkkiḷār* presents the *nāyaṇmār*'s pilgrimages as not pleasant experiences – gentle and stable in the case of *Campantar*, stormy and violent in the case of *Cuntarar* – but a journey of life, trail and turmoil which end in union with *Śiva*. It is for this reason, *Cēkkiḷār* plays the significant events in *nāyaṇmār*'s life i.e. the narrations of being possessed or being enslaved by *Śiva*, the periodic revelation of the devotional relationship through miracles, the *nāyaṇmār* expressing their emotional devotion in hymns and poems, and encountering *Śiva* in places they visited, treating the other devotees of *Śiva* as *Śiva* Himself, recital of *Śiva*'s name; these are played out in the *nāyaṇmār*'s life narration in ways that should be specific to Tamil *Śaiva* ideal of devotion, which are themselves transformation of earlier Tamil views monopolized by pre-devotional cultic context and ethos of servitude of bards exemplified in relation to the sacred power believed to be domiciling in the Tamil landscape. This may appear that this love for *Śiva* does not arise without significant interest on the details of cultic service nor

is it expressed except through such service and more commonly in the midst of one's householder life. For example, attention to a devotee of *Śiva* always implies to confer the rites of hospitality that usually comprise washing the feet of the devotee and lavish the devotee with hospitality. However, nothing will divert the *nāyaṇmār*'s from fulfilling their commitment to serve *Śiva*, not even when *Śiva* himself provides a way out. Everything the *nāyaṇmār* did is motivated not out of self-interest but out of love for *Śiva* out of *Śiva*-interest, one might observe.

Through their life stories of service (*tonṭu*: தொண்டு), *Cēkṇilār* demonstrates that the *Śaiva* community should cultivate the spirit of sacrifice, love and service as offered to *Śiva* whose patronage they enjoyed in temples located in their region. The contribution of *nāyaṇmār* was that they made this ideal of service as a popular moment and promoted good will and harmony among all ranks and classes. What distinguishes these *nāyaṇmār* is the potentiality and clarity of their understanding of the nature of service and this is revealed in multiplicity of acts. It is for this reason *Cēkṇilār* presents the *nāyaṇmār* as servants of the Lord who had realized *mei-jñānam* i.e that is the true knowledge of the self. This ordinary religious experience of the *nāyaṇmār* is not just confined to subjective experience; it is rather an experience of *Śiva* in many different ways and modes of service.

This mysticism which emerges from a *Śiva*-centred life is not an impersonal abstraction which clouds the soul of the *nāyaṇmār*, but it is a significant and practical guiding principle in their mystical life. In the *Periya Purāṇam*, the mystical insight into the theology of *Śiva*, translates into unique lives of service. It is important to note, that

the mysticism of the *Periya Purāṇam*, especially as it is read and interpreted through the lives of the saints, reveals not only a sense of *Śiva* at-work in the cosmos as an indwelling principle, but it is found in belief and faith in a personal God and in deed and action; it radically alters the saints' consciousness in its profound sense of intimacy and service to such a God. The love of *Śiva*, particularly is a love in service which is expressed through one living in the world. It might be said of the of the *nāyaṇmār* of the *Periya Purāṇam* that they 'taught' and 'inspired' the Tamil community by example, what they 'taught' was not substance of devotional attitude, but integrity of action inspired and motivated by love of *Śiva*.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MORAL LIVING IN THE *PERIYA PURĀṆAM*

8.1 Introduction

Cēkḱilār's concern in the *Periya Purāṇam* was to highlight the enlightened *nāyaṇmār* of Tamil *Śaivism*. He could not but narrate their worthwhile demeanour in praise worthy terms throughout his work. The *nāyaṇmār* of Tamil *Śaivism* did not lay down a code of law, and neither did *Cēkḱilār*, the author of the *Periya Purāṇam*, attempt to codify the rules of conduct. However, *Cēkḱilār* has portrayed a variety of meaningful incidents of 'saintly conducts' of the *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP.4-5)⁶⁹⁸. In a single sentence '*Pūcum nīrupōl uḷḷum puṇitarkaḷ*' (பூசும் நீருபோல் உள்ளும் புனிதர்கள்) (PP. 141)⁶⁹⁹ *Cēkḱilār* depicts the true nature of the *nāyaṇmār's* character that they are pure subjectively, as they outwardly smear white ashes. While describing the distinguishable character of the *nāyaṇmār*, *Cēkḱilār* also offers a definition of saintliness in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 4152-4153)⁷⁰⁰. In this way *Cēkḱilār* deals with moral questions in the context of a typical *Śaivite's* motive and vocation⁷⁰¹.

⁶⁹⁸ *Cēkḱilār* notes that these are 'the poet saints who extolled in song the Lord who dance in the sacred court ... and have since enjoyed the blessings which those garland of songs bestow. Further *Cēkḱilār* exclaims 'that the greatness of the devotees is beyond measure; beyond measure too their fame, which I am going to relate. Although to tell even the smallest measure of it is impossible, my measureless zeal will spur me on to the endeavour' (PP. 4-5).

‘மதிவளர் சடைமுடி மன்றுளாரை முன் துதிசெயும் நாயன்மார் தூய சொல்மலர் பொதி, நலன், நுகர்தரும் புனிதர் பேரவை விதிமுறை உலகினில் விளங்கி வெல்கவே’ (பெ.பு. 4).

‘அளவு இலாத பெருமையர் ஆகிய அளவு இலாஅடி யார்புகழ் கூறுகேன்

அளவுகூட உரைப்பு அரிது ஆயினும் அளவுஇல் ஆசை தூர்ப்ப அறைகுவேன்’ (பெ.பு. 5).

⁶⁹⁹ ‘...The whiteness of the ash reflects the purity of their hearts...’ (PP. 141).

⁷⁰⁰ ‘ஈசனையே பணிந்து உருகிஇன்பம் மிகக் களிப்புளய்திப் பேசினவாய் தழுதழுப்பக் கண்ணீரின் பெருந்தாரை மாசுஇலா நீறுஅழித்து அங்கு அருவிதர மயிர்சிலிர்ப்பக் கூசியே உடல் கம்பித்திருவார் மெய்க்குணம் மிக்கார்’ (பெ.பு. 4157)

‘நின்றாலும் இருந்தாலும் கிடந்தாலும் நடந்தாலும் மென்றாலும் துயின்றாலும் விழித்தாலும் இமைத்தாலும் மன்றுஆடும் மலர்ப்பாதம் ஒருகாலும் மறவாமை குன்றாத உணர்வுடையார் தொண்டர்ஆம் குணம்மிக்கார்’ (பெ.பு. 4158).

It is noteworthy to see in the *Periya Purāṇam*, therefore, there are many instances to prove that motives rather than rules, love's implications rather than law prevailed in the Tamil culture to judge *Śaiva* morality. The values derived in depth from the *Śaiva* tradition as, for instance, that justice must follow the same canons for a king's son as for the cow, and all the lowliest creatures of his state, and that any type of promise once made should be honoured, prove that love which fulfils the law does not supersede the

'These are the men and women of true integrity, whose delight it is to serve God with a melting heart, while their lips stammer, their hair stands on end, their limbs tremble, and from their bodies floods of tears wash off the scared ash. Whether they stand or sit, lie or walk, eat or sleep, with their eyes open or closed, they never forget his dancing flower feet. Those who are genuinely his servants never shaken in their awareness of the Lord' (PP. 4152-4153).

⁷⁰¹ The Word 'moral' can be an adjective, a count noun, or a plural noun. According to Tamil Lexicon of the Madras University when 'moral' is used as an adjective it denotes the judgment of 'right or wrong' of human action, character and behavior: moral examination or having a moral sense (இருவினை: *iruvinaṭai* – two classes of moral actions – good and evil). The word is also used to denote adherence to conventionally accepted standards of conduct acceptable in a particular society; virtuous: moral life (அறம்: *aram* – performance of duties to be practiced by each caste). It also refer to examination of the nature of ethics and the foundations of good and bad character and conduct (அறவுரை: *aravurai* – religious or moral instruction). The word also mean when used as adjective to mean that which arises from conscience or the sense of right and wrong: a moral obligation, moral courage (திறம்: *tiram* –moral conduct and uprightness). It also affirms of having psychological rather than physical or tangible effects: a moral support or victory (நன்னிலை: *nanṇilai*). It also means having a strong probability: a moral certainty (கொள்கை: *kolikai*: conformity to moral principles, good conduct). Used as noun, the word 'moral' and plural noun 'morals', it refers a lesson that can be derived from a story or experience (ஆசாரக்கோவை: *ācārakkōvai* or தர்மோபதேசம்: *tarmōpatēcam* – religious or moral instruction), Further as used noun it also refers to standards of behavior; principle of wring and wrong (நல்லொழுக்கம்: *nalloḷukkam*). In the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkkiḷār* has dealt with moral questions i.e. of what is 'right' and 'good' in the context of a typical *Śaivite* motive and vocation. For this to be clear, *Cēkkiḷār* has portrayed a variety of meaningful incidents of saintly conduct of the *nāyaṇmār*. *Cēkkiḷār* notes:

‘...தருக்கிய ஐம்பொறி அடக்கி மற்று அவர்தம் தாள்வணங்கி ஒருங்கிண நெஞ்சுஉடையார்க்கே அணித்துஆகும் உயர்நெறியே’ (பெ.பு.4164).

‘...They have subdued their five proud senses, concentrated their minds upon a single point and offer worship at his feet. Theirs is the noble path’ (PP. 4164).

Again *Cēkkiḷār* exclaims:

‘...ஆர்வம்மிகும் அன்பிராய் முப்போதும் அர்ச்சிப்பார;...’ (ng.G.4165)

‘...with unwavering love they offer worship ...’ (PP. 4165).

It is evident, therefore, in the *Periya Purāṇam*, motives rather than rulers, love's implications rather than law prevailed in the Tamil *Śaiva* culture to judge *Śaiva* morality. It was on this fundamental concept of love (*anpu*: அன்பு) that the *Periya Purāṇam* justifies the code of life that nothing of itself can be labelled as false or incorrect. The pathway to *Śiva* in *Periya Purāṇam* proclaims the unique truth of how a whole nation with one accord considered the superiority of the love for *Śiva* as the noble path to god (உயர்நெறி: *uyārneri*) and upheld it as *nāyaṇmār*'s supreme goal in life. *Śaiva* morality of Tamils, therefore, is a 'way of life'. It becomes evident in the *Periya Purāṇam* in particular significant situations where self-denying, self-effacing love forms the major criterion. In this sense 'moral' refer to a person who follow the *Śaiva* way of life totally and fully with Love of *Śiva* and to his devotes. In the *Periya Purāṇam*, it is not used in the sense of emotion but ordering of 'right conduct of life' (நன்னிலை: *nanṇilai*) according to standards of conduct acceptable in *Śaiva* society; virtuous: moral life (அறம்: *aram*).

law; it give profound meaning to life (PP. 86-135)⁷⁰². It was on this fundamental concept of love (*anpu*: அன்பு) that the *Periya Purāṇam* justifies the code of life that nothing of itself can be labelled as false or incorrect. The lives of the *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam*, therefore, testify to the fact that they confronted what was thrown at them in life according to the norms or tenets of the *Śaiva* ‘way of life’ (*neri*: நெறி) and upheld this *Śiva-nēti* (சிவ-நீதி) as the norm of one’s morality and the source of moral (நன்னெறி: *nannēri*) freedom with love and purity (PP. 4118)⁷⁰³.

The main concern of this chapter, therefore, is to detail various complex structures that stand as a backdrop to present that the *Śaiva* morality of the Tamils as a ‘way of life’ as lived by *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam*. It becomes evident in particular significant situations where the *nāyaṇmār*’s self-denying, self-effacing love forms the major

⁷⁰² It is an observable fact that, in the introduction to the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkkiḷār* highlights, that ‘this was the ancient city that was ruled by king *Maṇu* who was descended from the sun ... as guardian of all earthly creatures, he was their eyes and their way of life ... by virtue of his fairness in reconciling even with his very enemies, he was known as “The Just” and crowned with the title “*Maṇuṇīti Dharman*” or “The Sustainer of the Moral Order”’.

‘கொற்ற ஆழி குவலயம் சூழ்ந்திடச் சுற்றும் மன்னர் நிறைகடை சூழ்ந்திடச் செற்றம் நீக்கிய செம்மையின் மெய்ம்மனுப் பெற்ற நீதியும் தன்பெயர் ஆக்கினான்’ (பெ.பு. 100).

As noted in the ancient texts, he, the king, made sure that the Lord of the Vedas is worshipped and glorified in his kingdom. He steadfastly followed the path of virtue in his private, family and public life. He punished the evil doers, and with the support of the other kings, it is he who maintained the order of the world’ (PP 98-102). Further, it is stated, that this king who sought justice for the mother cow which lost its calf allegedly killed by the king’s son, and proclaimed ‘I am the guardian of all life’, and he thought to himself ‘I have set myself up as the protector of the whole world. Eventually, my rule is based on justice’ (PP 118-119) and he ordered the death of his son.

‘மன்உயிர் புரந்து வையம் பொதுக்கடிந்து அறத்தில் நீடும் என்நெறி நன்றால் என்னும் என் செய்தால் தீரும் என்னும் தன் இளங்கன்னு காணாத் தாய்முகம் கண்டு சோரும்...’ (பெ.பு. 118)

At the end of the narration *Cēkkiḷār* points out that the ‘Supreme Lord, is the Lord of all virtue who dwells in the temple, sensing what had happened, the Lord appeared to king *Maṇu* and granted him abundant grace’. In a similar manner, ‘as of king *Maṇu*, the Lord will bestow his grace on those who follow the path of virtue’ (PP 130-135).

‘...வென்றி அனுவேந்தனுக்கு வீதியிலே அருள்கொடுத்துச் சென்றருளும் பெருங்கருணைத்’ (பெ.பு. 134)

‘இனையவகை அறநெறியில் எண் இறந்தோர்க்கு அருள்புரிந்து...’ (பெ.பு. 135).

⁷⁰³ ‘சைவநெறி வைதிகத்தின் தருமநெறி யொடும் தழைப்ப...’ (பெ.பு. 4118).

‘The *Śaiva* path and the way of virtue prescribed in the Vedas flourished...’ (PP. 4118).

criterion. This chapter surveys the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* to highlight that the concept of morals derives from the concept of love (*anpu* : அன்பு), a deep down reality. The chapter is divided into the following sections.

8.2 The *Śaiva-neri* as the norm for morality in the *Periya Purāṇam*

8.3 The Mystical Nature of the *Śaiva*-morality in the *Periya Purāṇam*

8.4 The End Goal of the Moral Life in the *Periya Purāṇam*

8.5 Summarry

8.2 The Saintly Conduct of the *Nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam*

The objective of the *Periya Purāṇam* is clearly stated in the first line of the opening verse (PP. 1)⁷⁰⁴. Again at the last verse of the *Periya Purāṇam* this objective is reaffirmed (PP. 4182)⁷⁰⁵. In this verse *Cēkkiḷār* presents the ‘whole world’ (உலகெலாம்: *Ulakelām*) as being sustained by the testament of the legion of *Śiva-tonṭar* (சிவ தொண்டர்) i.e. the ‘Servants of the Lord’. The emphasis the ‘whole world’ (உலகெலாம்: *Ulakelām*) not only expresses *Cēkkiḷār*’s universalism but also reveal the *nāyaṇmār*’s personal longings and the universal applicability of their religious experience and expression. At the same instance the emphasis that the world is sustained by *Śiva-tonṭar* (சிவ-தொண்டர்) or ‘Servants of the *Śiva*’ illustrates the concept of universal love and fraternal tendency of mind towards the others. Amidst diverse pursuits, ranks and background and upbringing, these earnest preceptors and devotees of *Śiva* lived and moved with their fellow devotees in service, activated by one-pointed yearning for the realisation within of ‘*Anbe Śivam*’

⁷⁰⁴ ‘உலகு எலாம் உணர்ந்து’ (பெ.பு. 1)

‘In all the worlds, no one can comprehend or tell His greatness...’ (PP. 1).

⁷⁰⁵ ‘... மற்று உளார் அடியார் அவர்வான்புகழ் நின்றது எங்கும் நிலவி உலகெலாம்’ (பெ.பு. 4286).
‘...so the celestial glory of the servants of the Lord, who dwells in the golden court, everywhere abides throughout all the worlds’ (PP. 4286).

i.e. *Śiva* is love (TM. 270).⁷⁰⁶ It is for this *Cēkḷār* states ‘true wisdom consists in loving God’ (PP. 2746)⁷⁰⁷.

The lives and works of the *nāyaṇmār* immortalized in the *Periya Purāṇam*, therefore, opens a vast field where the subject-matter is not primarily concerned with thinking, but with doing i.e. service (*tonṭu*: தொண்டு) and being i.e. being a *Śiva-tonṭar* (சிவதொண்டர்) or ‘servant’ of *Śiva* (PP. 10)⁷⁰⁸. In the case of anything that is done, it is the goal which constitutes the first principle and cause of the whole thing; for it is that which sets the *nāyaṇmār* in motion. It was this unsullied love in the service of *Śiva* was a common unifying factor (PP. 4152)⁷⁰⁹. The foundation of the entire *Śaiva* culture promulgated by the *nāyaṇmār* is projected on this first principle (PP. 6)⁷¹⁰. This implies it is not the individual’s self-centred growth that is the final goal but rather the proper functioning of the individual person.

What is remarkable about these *nāyaṇmār* of the *Periya Purāṇam* is the potentiality and the clarity of their understanding and this is revealed in a multiplicity of

⁷⁰⁶ ‘அன்பு சிவம் இரண்டு என்பர் அறிவிலார்
அன்பே சிவமாவது ஆரும் அறிகிலார்
அன்பே சிவமாவது ஆரும் அறிந்தபின்
அன்பே சிவமாய் அமர்ந்திருந் தாரே’ (திரு. 270).

‘The ignorant think that love and God are two; They do not know love is God. After knowing that love of God. They remain possessed of love which is God’ (TM. 270).

⁷⁰⁷ ‘...ஞாபம் ஈசன்பால் அன்பே...’ (பெ.பு 2746)

⁷⁰⁸ ‘As to the title of the work ... I shall call this work “The History of the Holy Servants of the Lord” (PP. 10).

⁷⁰⁹ ‘ஈசனையே பணிந்து உருகிஇன்பம் மிகக் களிப்புளய்திப்...’ (பெ.பு. 4152)
‘These are the men and women of true integrity, whose delight it is to serve God...’ (PP. 4152).

⁷¹⁰ *Cēkḷār* recounts very humbly that ‘like a thirsty dog that tries to drink up the mighty ocean, I have set myself the task of setting forth the matchless glory of the holy servants of the Lord, although it lies beyond all human understanding’ (PP. 6).

‘தெரிவு அரும்பெருமைத் திருத்தொண்டர்தம் பொரு அரும்புகல் உற்றேன் முற்றப்
பெருகு தெண்கடல் உற்று உண் பெருநசை ஒருக ணங்கனை ஒக்கும் தகைமையேன்’ (பெ.பு. 6).

acts. This is clearly stated in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 4152-4153)⁷¹¹. What is obvious in these statements is that, *Cēkkiḷār* gives a fairly good account of saintliness according to the *Śaiva* tradition. Again, in memorable terms *Cēkkiḷār* portrays the general characteristic of *Śiva* saints (PP. 342)⁷¹². The hearts of such devotees were pure like the sacred ashes which they smeared over their body. They made all quarters illuminative owing to the lustre of their radiation (PP. 141)⁷¹³. Their persistent path of steadfast devotion engendered in them virtues and not vices. The essence of their humanity is bereft of all accidental factors, and their lives are a continuous realisation of the total knowledge and love of which they are capable; to serve *Śiva* alone was their objective in life and their benign love towards the Lord and His devotees were unfathomable (PP. 4162)⁷¹⁴. Some of these devotees, sought out by *Śiva* himself to bestow His *aruḷ* (grace), enjoyed the divine thrill in their very being out of glowing love (PP. 871-907)⁷¹⁵. In them we see the potential intellect, intuition, and will translating into a dynamic experiences and actions.

⁷¹¹ ‘ஈசனையே பணிந்து உருகிஇன்பம் மிகக் களிப்புளய்திப் பேசினவாய் தழுதழுப்பக் கண்ணீரின் பெருந்தாரை மாசுஇலா நீறுஅழித்து அங்கு அருவிதர மயிர்சிலிர்ப்பக் கூசியே உடல் கம்பித்திடுவார் மெய்க்குணம் மிக்கார்’ (பெ.பு. 4157)

‘நின்றாலும் இருந்தாலும் கிடந்தாலும் நடந்தாலும் மென்றாலும் துயின்றாலும் விழித்தாலும் இமைத்தாலும் மன்றுஆடும் மலர்ப்பாதம் ஒருகாலும் மறவாமை குன்றாத உணர்வுடையார் தொண்டர்ஆம் குணம்மிக்கார்’ (பெ.பு. 4158).

‘These are the men and women of true integrity, whose delight it is to serve God with a melting heart, while their lips stammer, their hair stands on end, their limbs tremble, and from their bodies floods of tears wash off the scared ash. Whether they stand or sit, lie or walk, eat or sleep, with their eyes open or closed, they never forget his dancing flower feet. Those who are genuinely his servants never shaken in their awareness of the Lord’ (PP. 4152-4153).

⁷¹² “There is no one who can compare with them,” he said, “By their devotion they have attained me. By their single-mindedness they have conquered the world. They have no imperfection. No one else could reach a state of opposites. Now you are to join theirs. Their love for me has brought them untold bliss. They have passed beyond the play of opposites. Now you are to join their number’ (PP. 342).

⁷¹³ ‘...The whiteness of the ash reflects the purity of their hearts...’ (PP. 141).

⁷¹⁴ ‘... They have set their hearts on *Śiva*. These are they who by their service have attained the feet of the Lord’ (PP. 4162).

⁷¹⁵ *Māṇakkañcārāṇ nāyaṇār* did not hesitate to cut off the hair of his daughter on her wedding day to offer it to a mendicant. These and a few more instances stated in the *Periya Purāṇam* are the remarkable events to highlight the concept of service and sacrifice and surrender from the *Śaivite* point of view.

The faithful love towards *Śiva* will result in equanimity (இருவினையொப்பு: *Iruviṇaiyoppu*)⁷¹⁶, tranquillity (சாந்தம்: *cāntam*)⁷¹⁷, fortitude (அடிப்பாடு: *aṭippāṭu*)⁷¹⁸ and persistence (ஆக்கிரகம்: *ākkirakam*)⁷¹⁹. These kinds of subjective states of the *nāyaṇmār* will have their culmination and fulfilment in external activities (PP. 3665-3752)⁷²⁰. The fruits of their saintliness or qualities, therefore, could be easily discerned in the lives of

⁷¹⁶ It is an attitude of perfect equanimity towards meritorious or sinful deeds. Good example of this is found in the story of *Tirunāvukkaracar*. It is stated that ‘when human beings are bound to the rock of impurity by the chain of deeds, both good and bad, and sink in the ocean of births, the Five Letter Prayer will give release. So now it raised the *nāyaṇmār* on the rock from the depths of the sea’ (PP. 1399).

‘இருவினைப் பாசமும் மலக்கல் ஆர்த்தலின் வருபவக் கடலில் வீழ் மாக்கள் ஏறிட அருளும் மெய் அஞ்செழுத்து அரசை இக்கடல் ஒருகல்மேல் ஏற்றிடல் உரைக்க வேண்டுமோ’ (பெ.பு. 1399).

It must be also noted that the word ‘equanimity’ has several expression in Tamil. Tamil Lexicon of the Madras University uses the words இருவினையொப்பு (*Iruviṇaiyoppu*) in the sense to explain the state of the soul in which it takes an attitude of perfect equanimity towards meritorious or sinful deeds புண்ணிய பாவங்களில் சமபுத்திசெய்துவிடுகை (*Puṇṇiya pāvaṇ kaḷil camaputticeytuviṭukai*). The word also signify the theme of extolling a woman maintaining equanimity during the separation of her husband. It is also used for a person who is resolute and steadfast சஞ்சலரகிதன் (*Cañcalarakitaṇ*). The word equanimity also means reconciliation சமாதானம் (*Camātāṇam*) or to mean a state of mind of its difference to pain or pleasure சுகதுக்கங்களைப் பொருட்படுத்தாத மனநிலை (*Cukatukkaṅkaḷaip poruṭpaṭuttāta maṇanilai*). However, in the *Periya Purāṇam*, it refers to the state of being in pure awareness of *Śiva*’s presence in life இருவினையொப்பு (*Iruviṇaiyoppu*). Here, the *nāyaṇmār* does not become attached to the world, rather they act as a ‘witness’ to the love of *Śiva* which is exemplified in their service to Him and His devotees.

⁷¹⁷ ‘...நாம் மகிழ்ந்து அளிக்கும் அவை’ (பெ.பு. 2109)

“We give you these gift with Joy” (PP. 2109).

The word tranquility (சாந்தம்: *cāntam*) is described in Tamil Lexicon of the Madras University in number of ways. It refers to the quality of quietness, stillness and calmness (அமரிக்கை: *amarikkai*). It also denotes transparency (துலக்கம்: *tulakkam*), brightness (பிரகாசம்: *pirakācam*), conscious waking state (நனவு: *naṇavu*). In the *Periya Purāṇam* it refers clarity of mental vision (மனத்தெளிவு: *Maṇatteḷivu*) and in the sense of clear vision of truth (நற்காட்சி: *naṅkāṭci*).

⁷¹⁸ ‘மாகுஇல் வாய்மை நெல்வாயில் மறைவார்’ (பெ.பு. 2107).

‘... the flawless and truthful ...’ (PP. 2107). In another occasion it is narrated that ‘they have subdued their five proud senses, concentrated their minds upon a single point and offer worship at his feet’ (PP. 4164).

‘...தருக்கிய ஐம்பொறி அடக்கி மற்றும் அவர்தம் தாள்வனங்கி...’ (பெ.பு. 4164).

The word fortitude (அடிப்பாடு: *aṭippāṭu*) has several expression in Tamil. Tamil Lexicon of the Madras University uses the word to firmness or stability (உறுதியான நிலை: *uṟutiyāṇa nilai*). It is also used to mean Strength, power, prowess, ability (சக்தி: *akti*), firmness of mind, strength of will (திடம்: *tiṭam*) or to mean a man of fortitude (வீரமுள்ளவன் : *vīramuḷḷavan*). In the *Periya Purāṇam*, it refers to the state of the *nāyaṇmār* and their attachment to the feet of God (திருவடியில் ஈடு பாடு: *truvaṭiyil īṭu pāṭu*).

⁷¹⁹ ‘...தங்கள் கொள்கை நீதியினில் பிழையாது நெறியில் நிற்போர்...’ (பெ.பு. 4173).

‘...they stand fast in the path of justice...’ (PP. 4173).

Tamil Lexicon of the Madras University explains this word persistence (ஆக்கிரகம்: *ākkirakam*) in different ways. It means obstinacy (பிடிவாதம்: *piṭivātam*), firm attachment (விடாப்பற்று: *viṭāppaṟru*), stability (நிலைபெறுகை: *nilaipērukai*) and also in the sense to struggle with stubbornness (அருமுயற்சி யெடுத்தல்: *arumuyaṇ ciyeṭuttal*). In the *Periya Purāṇam*, it refers to the state of the *nāyaṇmār*’s firm attachment to the feet of God (திருவடியில் ஈடு பாடு: *truvaṭiyil īṭu pāṭu*) and the stubbornness they have to stay with the Lord.

⁷²⁰ *Ciruttōṇṭar* went to the extreme state of ecstatic behaviour of cutting his only son while his wife was holding him to cook food for the mendicant saint i.e. *Śiva*.

the *nāyaṇmār* in terms of asceticism (துறவு: *turavu*) (PP. 4027-4043)⁷²¹, strength of their character (சிறப்பு: *Cirappu*) (PP. 650-830)⁷²², purity (அகத்துய்மை: *akattuymai*) (PP. 507-549)⁷²³ and charity (கிரிகை: *kiriyai*) (PP. 1078-1205)⁷²⁴. As ascetics the *nāyaṇmār* derived pleasure in sacrificing their possessions. They did not aspire for mundane enjoyments nor were experience pleasures, since they had realised that such experience ephemeral in nature (PP. 4027-4043).⁷²⁵ Hence they longed for lasting joy which finds no measure. This attitude had made so tremendous an effect on them that they did not attach values to the earthly substances. As a result, they were able to sacrifice their belongings for the sake of their devotional pursuits. As they realized that they are part of the whole community of *Śiva* followers, they did not hesitate to sacrifice either part of the whole of their body.

The strength of their life character refers to a purified state of the *nāyaṇmār*'s personality which has relinquished the sensuous pleasures caused by the phenomenal

⁷²¹ The life of *Kaliya nāyaṇār* who went on to the extent of cutting his throat to use the blood as oil for burning the temple lamps as he was poverty stricken can be cited as an example. In another instance it is narrated that the '*Cēra* king had reached the conviction that the benefits of kingly rule, the pursuit of riches, altruistic service and the practice of austerity all find their fulfilment in the feet of the Lord who dances in the sacred court at Tillai...' (PP. 3770)

‘நீடும்உரிமைப் போர் அரசால் நிகழும் பயனும் நிறைதவமும் தேடும்பொருளும் பெருந்துணையும் தில்லைத் திருச்சிறற்பலத்துள் ஆடும் கழலே எனத் தெளிந்து அறிவால் எடுத்த திருப்பாதம் கூடும் அன்பில் அர்ச்சனைமேல் கொண்டர் சேரர்குலப் பெருமான்’ (பெ.பு. 3775).

⁷²² *Kaṇṇappar*, whose intense love towards Lord *Śiva* was matchless, had the courage to pluck his eyes to block the bleeding in the eyes of the Lord is an clear example.

⁷²³ *Amarnīti* was emboldened to climb on the one plate of the balance, while the other one contained a piece of loin-cloth. When all his wealth did not make the balance erect, he had decided to show his integrity and honesty to the saint (here too *Śiva* in disguise) by himself climbing on the balance.

⁷²⁴ *Tirukkuṟippuṭṭonṭar* too resolved to end his life dashing his head against the stone in order to save his reputation and prestige. He could not return the saint's wear (again *Śiva*) after washing and drying up, owing to unexpected (but God-designed) rain.

⁷²⁵ The typical example of this is *Kaliya nāyaṇār*. The *nāyaṇār* was emboldened to climb on the one plate of the balance, while the other one contained a piece of loin-cloth. When all his wealth did not make the balance erect, he had decided to show his integrity and honesty to the saint (here too *Śiva* in disguise) by himself climbing the balance.

world and has attained patience and fortitude (PP. 908-924)⁷²⁶. As the ascendancy of their self-centred life has been annihilated, the *nāyaṇmār* attunes itself to the steady and invigorating spell of religious life. In the life history of the *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam*, there are number of instance to substantiate these attitudes (PP. 4060-4068)⁷²⁷. Owing to their faith in prayer, conviction on worship and on the efficacy of unfailing *aruḷ* (grace) of *Śiva*, the *nāyaṇmār* did not deviate from the life of devotion and dedication (PP. 939)⁷²⁸. Even though their day to day life was interrupted due to the tests of *Śiva*, never did they alter their course of living, but stood firm on their life of charity, compassion and determination. As the *nāyaṇmār* had been deeply immersed in the love of the *Śiva*, it was but easy for them to revitalize their heart in the field of religious experience. *Cēkḷār*, while explaining the life of *Kuṅkuliyaḷ Kalyar nāyaṇār* asserts that for such a devotee *Śiva* would stand erect from His bending posture (PP.831-865)⁷²⁹.

At the same instance, *Cēkḷār* praise the purity of each *nāyaṇmār* while introducing him to the readers. In a single sentence, ‘*Pūcum nīrupōḷ uḷḷum puṇitarkaḷ*’

⁷²⁶ It is narrated that even in poverty; the *nāyaṇār* worked as a day labourer in the paddy fields, and with unwavering devotion used the paddy which he received as wages to make a meal for the Lord. Through all this, his wife remained unfailingly loyal to him. She gathered leaves from the garden, cooked them and kept them in a pot for her husband to eat, while he dutifully continued his service for the Lord.

⁷²⁷ *Kaṇampulla nāyaṇār* used to sell grass and with that earning, light the lamps in the temple. As the region was desolated due to famine, he could not get even a fistful of grass to sell and get oil. Hence he was determined to burn his long hair to burn the lamps and executed his decision (PP. 4060-4068).

⁷²⁸ *Cēkḷār* notes that *Āṇāyar nāyaṇār* came into the world to bring glory to his caste, by the willing service which he rendered to all who wore the pure white holy ash. To the Lord *Śiva* alone he offered the worship of his heart and hands and voice (PP. 939).

‘ஆயர்குலத்தை விளங்கிட வந்து உதயம் செய்தார் தூயசுடர்த்திரு நீறுவிரும்பு தொழும்பு
உள்ளார் வாயினின் மெய்யின் வழுத்தும் மனத்தின் வினைப்பாலின் பேயுடன் ஆடுபிரான்
அடி அல்லது பேணாதார்’ (பெ.பு. 939)

⁷²⁹ The *nāyaṇār* was used to purchasing a perfumed substance called ‘*kuṅkuliyaḷ*’ (குங்குலியம்) i.e. dammar and derived ecstatic joy in offering it to *Śiva* temple for worship. He even went to the extent of selling his wife’s sacred ornament (*tāli*: தாலி) and brought ‘*kuṅkuliyaḷ*’. At *Tiruppanandal* temple the king was sorrow-stricken as the *Śiva*-liṅga was not brought upright even by a number of elephants. The *nāyaṇār* made up his mind either to make the idol erect or lose his life. He tied one edge of the rope to the idol and the other edge around his neck. On seeing his determined oneness of mind and spirit *Śiva* stood erect.

(பூசும் நீருபோல் உள்ளும் புனிதர்கள்) (PP. 141)⁷³⁰ *Cēkkiḷār* depicts the true nature of the *nāyaṇmār*'s character that they are pure subjectively, as they outwardly smear white ashes. These symbols such as white ashes and sacred beads made the *nāyaṇmār* externally pure, while the recital of the Five-Lettered-Prayer made them internally pure (PP. 3632)⁷³¹. It shows that purity is a pre-requisite to be pure externally as is required to be internally pure also. The *nāyaṇmār* also seldom had yielded to the temptations of the flesh. Rather they maintained balance in all their endeavours owing to worship and love. As we have already seen, the *nāyaṇmār* were able to sacrifice either the whole or part of their body because of the meagre significance they attached to the demands of the flesh (PP. 4027-4043)⁷³². Almost all the *nāyaṇmār* categorically declare that the body and its constituent organs hamper their spiritual. The whole narration of the *Periya Purāṇam* elaborates the path adopted by the *nāyaṇmār* to overcome the lure of the flesh and to carry out the religious obligation (PP. 4044-4050)⁷³³.

It should be stated that the large number of *nāyaṇmār* had taken adequate care to combat evil thoughts, due to their poignant prayers and deep involvement in the religious activities (PP. 1042)⁷³⁴. They loved other devotees as themselves and expressed mercy

⁷³⁰ '...The whiteness of the ash reflects the purity of their hearts...' (PP. 141).

⁷³¹ '... சித்தம் தெளியச் சிவன் அஞ்சுஎழுத்து ஓதும் வாய்மை நித்தம் நியமம் எனப்போற்றும் நெறியில் நின்றார்' (பெ.பு. 3637)

'...He was steadfast in the daily discipline of reciting *Śiva*'s Five-Letter-Prayer, as the means of gaining insight' (PP. 3637).

⁷³² *Kaliyanāyaṇār* cut his throat to use the blood as oil for burning the temple lamps, as he was poverty-stricken.

⁷³³ In these verses narrates *Cēkkiḷār* the story of *Catti nāyaṇmār* who cut out the tongue which spoke of the devotee of the Lord with disrespect (PP. 4044-4050).

⁷³⁴ 'அருமறைப் பயன் ஆகிய உருத்திரம் அதனை வருமுறைப் பெரும் பகலும் எல்லியும் வழுவாமே திருமலர்ப் பொருட்டு இருந்தவன் அணையவர் சில நாள் ஒருமை உய்த்திட உடை இடம் மகிழ்ந்தவர் உவந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 1042).

even to those who intended to murder them (PP. 608-649)⁷³⁵. In the community of devotees, there prevailed only devotion and equanimity devoid of enmity, exasperation, prejudices and insidious deeds⁷³⁶. Further, the *nāyaṇmār* believed that *Śiva* is the pioneer person in extending mercy to the enemies as well as to the destitute (PP. 1637)⁷³⁷. *Śiva*'s gracious deeds of drinking poison to save the universe, wearing the crescent and Ganges

'He would chant the hymn day and night without ceasing, like Ayaṇ seated on the lotus. After chanting thus for a period of several days together, the pleasure of *Umā*'s Lord, he would attain the state of concentration' (PP. 1042).

⁷³⁵ The story of *Ēṇātiṇātaṇ* is a clear example of this. The *nāyaṇār* was a distinguished member of the toddy-tapper caste. Now in that town there lived another man who followed the same profession, named *Aticūraṇ* who was extremely arrogant and conceited, and believed that there was no more skilled than himself in the field of swordsmanship. However, his employment as an instructor in that art began to decline, and with that the income of his hereditary profession diminished too. Mean, just as the light of the moon grows dim while the sun rises in the morning sky, while *Ēṇātiṇātaṇ* was prospering. On account of this *Aticūraṇ* conceived an implacable hostility towards *Ēṇātiṇātaṇ*. *Aticūraṇ* called for a fight with *Ēṇātiṇātaṇ* and his people. The two warrior groups met in the specified place. The entire battle very soon took a turn with the side of the jealous *Aticūraṇ* loosing in front of the mountain bowed Lord's devotee i.e. *Ēṇātiṇātaṇ*. *Aticūraṇ* was defeated and he ran away from the field. Determined to kill *Ēṇātiṇātaṇ*, *Aticūraṇ* made a dubious plan and in *Ēṇātiṇātaṇ* sent across a message that without the loss of other lives they both could fight at some other place. *Aticūraṇ* knowing that the devotee respects the Holy Ash more than his own life and that he would never harm the people, who smear that holy substance, smeared his forehead with the white ash. He never used to wear that holy symbol before! When *Ēṇātiṇātaṇ* saw the holy symbol on *Aticūraṇ* forehead, he was shocked at the sight. He had never seen it on his forehead. The presence of the Holy Ash indicated that he had become a devotee of the Lord *Śiva*. So thinking that killing a devotee of *Śiva* and he was ready to sacrifice his life for the glory of Holy Ash. The Lord intervened and saved *Ēṇātiṇātaṇ*. Let the compassionate thinking of *Ēṇātiṇātaṇ* in thinking good even for the opponent who wanted to kill him be praised recalls *Cēkkiḷār*.

⁷³⁶ In a beautiful stanza, *Cēkkiḷār* delineates the evolving world its dense obscurities and the two most intimate lovers of *Śiva* - *Campantar* and *Tirunāvukkaracar* in the unity of one-pointed consciousness. In this case *Cēkkiḷār* did not see two seers! The love energy of *Śiva* in *Sakti*, the moving principle of grace, clears the clouds of unknowing before the unifying and unanimous vision of truth perceived by the child of wisdom i.e. *Campantar* and noble *Tirunāvukkaracar* at the *Vedaranyam* temple:

‘அருள் பெருகு தனிக்கடலும் உலகுக்கு எல்லாம் அன்பு செறி கடலுமாம் எனவும் ஓங்கும்
பொருள்சமய முதல்சைவ நெறிதான் பெற்று புண்ணியக் கண் இரண்டு எனவும் புவனம் உய்ய
இருள் கடுஉண்டவர் அருளும் அகிலம் எல்லாம் ஈன்றாள் தன் திருவருளும் எனவும் கூடித்
தெருள் கலைஞானக் கன்றும் அரசும் சென்று செஞ்சடை யானவர் கோயில் சார்ந்தார் அன்றே’
(பெ.பு. 1455).

‘...They were like an incomparable sea of grace, an ocean of love for all the world; or like a sacred pair of eyes for the way of *Śiva*, the first among religions; or the very embodiment of the grace of Him who drank the dark poison to save the world and the grace of her who gave birth to all the world’ (PP. 1455). It is also stated that both of these *nāyaṇmār* stepped into divine presence in a crescendo of love ineffable and experienced the bliss of *Śiva*. Two of them were bound to one another in genuine and heartfelt love, and together conceived the desire to worship the feet of him...’ (PP. 1454)

‘... உள்ளம் நிறை காதலினால் ஒருவர் ஒருவரில் கலந்த உண்மையோடும் வெள்ளநீர்த்
திருத்தோணி வீற்றிருந்தார் சுழல் வணங்கும் விருப்பின்மிக்கார்’ (பெ.பு. 1454).

⁷³⁷ ‘திருஅருள் பெருமையை உணர்வார் எம்பிரான் தரும் கருணை கொல் இது...’ (பெ.பு.1642).

“...He realized then how great is the grace of the Ruler of the gods. “So this is what the mercy of the Lord is really like!” (PP. 1642).

on his matted locks, smearing the white ashes all over the body shedding tears out of compassion towards the demolition of the three cities of the demons, paved the way for shaping the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* towards piety, compassion and deliverance (PP. 2638, 363)⁷³⁸. *Cēkkiḷār* shows as to how *Śiva* compassionately condescends to the extent of helping His sincere devotees to get rid of their suffering in the form of a sage both mild and terrible.

It is for this reason the following then can be considered as indicating the nature and function of saintliness according to *Cēkkiḷār*. That the *nāyaṇmār* wore sacred objects so as to exemplify identification and recognition. They patronised the appropriate service akin to *Śiva* worship. They led a life of service based on love. The *nāyaṇmār* did not refrain from serving their fellow devotees at any cost. At the empirical level they had different occupations to eke out livelihood. Each profession was respected and was the basis for building up the rapport with *Śiva* and His fellowmen. The women saints equally proved their eminence in the spheres of worship, service and sacrifice. They experienced divinity in every walk of life and finally resolved in the life of communion with God. They believed and exemplified that the worship of the Lord will engender in self-

⁷³⁸ It is this stated that the *nāyaṇār* sang “To save the gods, you turned the poison into nectar and drank it down! For the sake of *Mārkaṇṭhyar*, you destroyed *Kālaṇ*! Today, for your servant’s sake, may your glory be diffused throughout the world!” (PP. 2643).

‘ஆலமே அமுதம் ஆக உண்டு வானவர்க்கு அனித்துக் காலனை மார்க்கண்டர்க்காக்
காய்ந்தனை அடியேற்கு இன்று ஞாலம் நின் புகழேஆக வேண்டும் நான்மறைகள் ஏத்தும்
சீலமே ஆலவாயில் சிவபெருமானே என்றார்’ (பெ.பு. 2643).

In another occasion it is stated that ‘When for the salvation of the world the Lord drank the poison from the sea of milk, it might have seemed as if it was the force of human penances that prevented him from swallowing it. In fact it was the Lord himself who checked the poison and held it in his throat. On this account, the potter’s wife, who surpassed Aruntai in chastity, used to venerate the throat of the Lord *Śiva*, by continuously repeating “Holy blue throat”, or “Tiru Nīlakaṇṭam” (PP. 363).

‘அவர் தங்கன் மனைவி யாரும் அருந்ததிக் கற்பின் மிக்கப் புவனங்கள் உய்யஜயர் பொங்கு
நஞ்சு உண்ண யாம்செய் தவம் நின்று தடுத்தது என்னத் தகைந்து தான் தரித்தது என்று
சிவன் எந்தை கண்ட தன்னைத் திருநீல கண்டம் என்பார்’ (பெ.பு. 363).

integration and culminate in congregation. The individual practice will have its impact on social integration and communal harmony.

This saintliness of the *nāyaṇmār* allows them to seek universal peace - peace at all levels of men of goodwill. Peace followed in the footsteps of the *nāyaṇmār* and where it was thwarted, these *nāyaṇmār* ruthlessly purged all discordant factors so that concord might prevail. Equanimity in thought, word, and deed was acknowledged to be the criterion whereby the community attained to its proper stature. Whenever peace prevailed in the Tamil region, the communal life of the *Śiva*-devotees attained a high standard of excellence in all sphere of activity. *Cēkkiḷār* cites many situations where unity of direction becomes necessary in order to secure efficiency in collective action of any kind. The episode of *Campantar* trying to restore the *Śaiva* way of life as narrated in the of the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 2522-2779) is a clear example not only of the path of collective action mooted by *Kulacciṛaiyār nāyaṇār*, the Prime Minister, and *Maṅkaiyarkkaraci*, the Queen, under the inspiring unity of direction afforded by the young *Campantar* in order to vanquish the flowering of other cults in the Tamil region, to establish peace but also of the assurance that the presence of *Śva* enthroned in his heart would prove beneficial and faultlessly good to all *Śiva*'s chosen devotee (PP. 2707)⁷³⁹.

In this episode (PP. 2522-2779) *Cēkkiḷār* narrates that *Pāṇṭya* territory of his time was overrun by Jains and the *Pāṇṭya* king had abandoned the *Śaiva* faith, and *Campantar* was called upon by the Queen *Maṅkaiyarkkaraci* and the Prime minister *Kulacciṛaiyār*

⁷³⁹ '... பஞ்சவன் நாட்டுளோர்க்கு நல்நெறி காட்ட வந்தார் நான்மறை வாழ்வந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 2712).
'...to uphold the four Vedas and to demonstrate the path of righteousness to the people of *Pāṇṭya* realm' (PP. 2712).

nāyaṇār to avert the distress of the people and to restore peace and the *Śaiva* faith to its pristine glory. *Campantar* assured everyone that the presence of *Śiva* enthroned in his heart would prove beneficial and faultlessly good to all *Śiva*'s chosen devotees. *Cēkkiḷār* describes in clear terms *Campantar* first appearance in the Court of *Maturai* (PP. 2631)⁷⁴⁰. At the end one could see the victorious culmination of *Campantar*'s venture into the domain of *Maturai*, and his courageous vindication of the supreme love and *aruḷ* (grace) of *Śiva* on the banks of *Vaikai* river at *Tiruvadakam*. *Campantar* sang his famous *Tirupasuram Ode* (திருப்பாசுரம் ஓடை) of twelve verses and it was written on palm leaf, while the Jains wrote down their salient doctrine – *Atti-Natti* (அத்தி-நாத்தி : 'it is and it is not'), and both parties floated their scroll on the river. It was a historic occasion which demonstrated to the world, the infallible Truth of *Śaivism* and the glory of *Śiva*.

Tirupasuram embodies the vision of *Śiva* and the teachings in the Vedas and the *Śaiva Āgamas* in a nutshell. In ten scintillating verses *Cēkkiḷār* comments in detail on each of the twelve verses with meticulous care and sums up the fulfilment of the *Śaiva* way of life, and his closing line is indeed memorable (PP.2746)⁷⁴¹. *Cēkkiḷār* interpretation of this holy hymn can be acclaimed as the quintessence of the infallible truth of *Śiva-jñānam* (சிவஞானம்). It is a first-hand realisation of the blessed experience of

⁷⁴⁰ There they beheld enraptured the embodiment of divine wisdom, the sole champion of the four Vedas, a crescent moon that enlightened heaven and earth alike, the source of seven kinds of music that extols the glory of the Lord' (PP. 2631).

‘ஞானத்தின் திருவுருவை நான்மறையின் தனித்துணையை வானத்தின் மிசைஅன்றி மண்ணில் வளர்மதிக் கொழுந்தைத் தேன்நக்க மலர்க்கொன்றைச் செஞ்சடையார் சீர்தொடுக்கும் கானத்தின் எழுபிறப்பைக் கண்களிப்பக் கண்டார்கள்’ (பெ.பு. 2631).

⁷⁴¹ ‘...True wisdom consists in loving God...’ (PP. 2746)

‘... ஞானம் ஈசன்பால் அன்பே...’ (பெ.பு.2746).

For *Cēkkiḷār* commentary on *Tirupasuram* (PP. 2724-2746), see Appendix IV. *Cēkkiḷār* notes that the gist of the hymn inscribed on the leaf was that our Lord *Śiva* is all in all (PP. 2750).

‘எம்பிரான் சிவனே எல்லாப் பொருளும் என்று எழுதும் ஏட்டில் தம்பிரான் அருளால் வேந்தன் தன்னை’ (பெ.பு. 2750).

Śiva effected by His plenum of *aruḷ* (grace). In his explanation of the *Tirupasuram*, *Cēkkiḷār* extols the beauty of *Śiva* as all pervading yet indwelling in *aruḷ* (grace) ineffable in the depths of those who seek Him in infinitude of love unto His most gracious feet. The most exalted illumination is radiant love, so perfect in *Śiva*.

What is of significant of this episode is the excellence of the path of collective action, mooted by *Tirunāvukkaracar*, *Maṅkaiyarkkaraci* and *Kulacciṛaiyār nāyaṇār* under the inspiring unity of direction afforded by *Campantar* in order to vanquish the autocratic monopoly of the king from the *Pāṇṭiya* territory and to avert the distress of the people and to restore the *Śaiva* faith to its pristine glory. This shows the unity of one-pointed consciousness, unanimous vision of truth experienced by the *nāyaṇmār* which can be characterised as the strength of their personality. At the end of the narration of this episode of *Campantar* effecting changes and transforming the common people to live the *Śaiva* way of life: It emerges that the kingdom of the premier Tamil state were won over by the will of *Śiva* working in and through the enlightened *Campantar*. Wrong was righted; justice and the *Śaiva* way of life was upheld (PP. 2761)⁷⁴²; the temple of *Śiva-Alavai* at *Maturai* became a power centre (PP. 2775)⁷⁴³ and the river *Vaikai* was filled to the brim with the waters of *Śiva's aruḷ* (grace). In this masterpiece of divine-human relationship between the *nāyaṇār* and *Śiva*, integral oneness was seen to be the root of

⁷⁴² ‘...நிதியம் வேத நீதி ஆகியே நிகழ்ந்தது எங்கும் மேதினி புனிதம் ஆக வெண்ணீற்றின் விரிந்த சோதி மாதிரம் தூய்மை செய்ய’ (பெ.பு. 2761).

‘...as a result, the justice which he administered throughout the land came into accord with the justice promulgated by the Vedas. The radiance of the holy ash spread far and wide...sanctifying the world’ (PP. 2761)

⁷⁴³ ‘மீனவன் தேவியாரும் குலச்சிறையாரும் மிக்க ஞானமசம் பந்தர் பாதம் நாள்தொறும் பணிந்து போற்ற ஆனசண்பையர் கோனாரும் ஆலவாய் அமர்ந்தார் பாதம்...’ (பெ.பு. 2775).

‘While the *Pāṇṭiya* queen and *Kulacciṛaiyār* daily paid homage at *Campantar's* feet, he himself worshipped the feet of the Lord of *Ālavāy*, his heart melting in ecstasy’ (2775).

being good (PP. 440-466)⁷⁴⁴. The *nāyaṇmār* of different grades in the *Periya Purāṇam* were all energised by the power of goodwill and harmony, emanating from their servitude to *Śiva*: Human living involves unity, as unity involves goodness was amply demonstrated not only in this moving spectacle, but also in the life of every one of the *nāyaṇmār* narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam*.

However, what is important to note here is that *Cēkkiḷār* had a conventional set of metaphysics, religious and cultural myths, and ideals of moral and social order, a mystical vision of the universe, world-view, philosophies and theologies which shaped his interpretation of the *nāyaṇmār*'s saintly conduct of life and moral vocation i.e. the *Śaiva* 'way of life' (*neri*: நெறி) and which is upheld as *Śaiva-neri* (சைவ-நெறி) (PP. 4118)⁷⁴⁵. Moreover, it is within this framework of belief, in the *Periya Purāṇam* that *Cēkkiḷār* recollects the life of the *nāyaṇmār* with his emphasis unity of everything is *Śiva* (PP. 350)⁷⁴⁶ and of humanizing effect on *nāyaṇmār*'s lives (PP. 337)⁷⁴⁷, of their ultimate

⁷⁴⁴ The classical example for this is the narration of the story of *Ḥaiyāṇkūti Māraṇ*. The *nāyaṇār* used the wealth of the produce of his farms in extending his hospitality and generosity to all who stood in the need of his help. Gradually he faces landslides and periodic droughts and floods ruined his crops and his harvest failed, so that he found himself in indigent circumstances. Even so, he struggled to continue his service and made personal sacrifices. One day *Śiva* disguised as age old man sought hospitality. His wife who shared in every way his large-hearted willingness to offer the stranger an appetising meal prepared a rice meal and curry and served the hungry pilgrim with great devotion. The saintly sage blessed them with a vision of *Śiva* and by his grace they attained the goal of self-realisation. The *nāyaṇār*'s values did not line in his possessions or in his actions, but in his insatiable love of *Śiva*. To serve a servitor of *Śiva* is to serve *Śiva* himself. Here one's mode of living takes precedence over 'having'. The *nāyaṇār*'s vision of *Śiva* was turned to the eternal verities of truth, love and wisdom, and hence, *Cēkkiḷār* bows to this selfless servitor in recognition of his servitude to others as service done to *Śiva*.

⁷⁴⁵ 'சைவநெறி வைதிகத்தின் தருமநெறி யொடும் தழைப்ப...' (பெ.பு. 4118).

'The *Śaiva* path and the way of virtue prescribed in the Vedas flourished...' (PP. 4118).

⁷⁴⁶ 'ஆதிஆய நடுவும் ஆகி அளவுஇலா அளவும் ஆகிச் சோதிஆய உணர்வும் ஆகித் தோன்றிய பொருளும் ஆகிப் பேதியா ஏகம் ஆகிப் பெண்ணும் ஆய் ஆணும் ஆகிப்...' (பெ.பு. 350).

'He is the beginning and middle, measure without measure, light of understanding, all created matter, one without division, male and female...' (PP. 350).

⁷⁴⁷ 'மன்பெருந்திரு மாமறை வண்டு சூழ்ந்து அன்பர் சிந்தை அலர்ந்த செந்தாமரை நன்பெரும் பரமானந்த நல்மது எந்தரத்தும் அளித்து எதிர்நின்றன' (பெ.பு. 337).

desire of serving him alone - that inspired and changed their life. Such foundational perspectives, *Cēkkiḷār* believes, also gave a vision and inspired a new dynamism to the *nāyaṇmār*'s moral integrity and awareness. In this way, *Cēkkiḷār* reflects the community of the *nāyaṇmār* as exemplifying its own moral character, shaped by its own traditional stories, rituals and symbols. Its purpose and vocation as he observes 'the way of *Śiva* is the eternal, true way, and it is the *Śaivite* way that is the eternal way of deliverance' (PP. 2723)⁷⁴⁸.

Cēkkiḷār acclaims that *Campantar* embodied the excellent attributes reflected by all the consecrated servitors of *Śiva* and *Śaiva* way of life i.e. *Śaiva-neri* (சைவ-நெறி) (PP.1904)⁷⁴⁹. More poignantly, there is a moving reference in the *Periya Purāṇam*, which recounts the evolution of *Cākkiyar nāyaṇār* as a *Śivajñāni* (சிவஞானி) i.e. one who has the knowledge of *Śiva*, who learnt to practice out of conviction the precepts of *Śaivism* even though he was brought up as a Buddhist (PP. 3641-3658). In the course of his spiritual life, he discovered his intimate allegiance to the *Śaiva-neri* (சைவ-நெறி) and by *Śiva's aruḷ* (grace) became convinced of the validity of the path of *Śiva* ('சைவநெறி அல்லவற்றுக்கு இல்லை என' : *Śaivaneri allavarrukku illai eṇa*), truth of reality of *Śiva* (உய்வகையால் பொருள் சிவன் என்று: *uyvakaiyāl poruḷ Śivaṇ eṇru*), and the four cardinal truths of *Śaiva* pathways – that there is the deed, the door, the consequence of

'His sacred feet, like the red lotus, blossom in the heart of those who love him. Around those feet, like beetles round the lotus flower, resound the everlasting Vedas, now those feet stand before me, unworthy as I am, and have vouchsafed to me the wine of heavenly bliss' (PP. 337).

⁷⁴⁸ '...நிலவுமெய்ந்நெறி சிவநெறி என்பதும்...' (பெ.பு. 2723).

⁷⁴⁹ 'வேதநெறி தழைத்து ஓங்க மிகுசைவத்துறை விளங்கப் பூதபரம் பரைபொலியப் புனிதவாய் மலர்ந்தமுத சீதவள வயல்புகலித் திருஞானசம்பந்தர் பாதமலர் துலைக்கொண்டு திருத்தொண்டு பரவுவாம்' (பெ.பு 1904).

'For the advancement of the religion of the Vedas, for the glory of the *Śaivite* path and for the benefit of all living creatures, *Tirunāṇa Campantar* ... opened his mouth and cried. Now I place my head beneath his feet, and proceed to sing the praise of the sacred service which he performed' (PP. 1904).

action and the one who awards deserts to the doer ('செய்வினையும் செய்வானும் அதன் பயனும் கொடுப்பானும் மெய்வகையால் நான்கு ஆகும்: *seyvinaium ceyvānum atan payaṇum koṭuppānum meyvakaiyāl nāṇku ākum*) (PP. 3645)⁷⁵⁰. The *nāyaṇār* realised that it was only *Śaiva-neri* (சைவ-நெறி) that showed the path to realizing *Śiva's arul* (grace) and by his silent devotion, he followed from within the light *Śiva* and release. He realized that ostentatious outward rituals and forms of worship did not matter, so long as he took to ceaseless remembrance of the name of *Śiva*. While outwardly remaining in the Buddhist fold, he attained the feet of *Śiva* and has an honoured place in the *Periya Purāṇam* as a servitor of *Śiva*⁷⁵¹.

It is an observable fact that, in the introduction to the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkkiḷār* also highlights the story of *Maṇu*⁷⁵² so as to affirm the basis of the *Śaiva-neri* (சைவ-

⁷⁵⁰ 'செய்வினையும் செய்வானும் அதன் பயனும் கொடுப்பானும் மெய்வகையால் நான்கு ஆகும் விதித்த பொருள் எனக்கொண்டே இவ்இயல்பு சைவநெறி அல்லவற்றுக்கு இல்லை என உய்வகையால் பொருள் சிவன் என்று அருளாலே உணர்ந்து அறிந்தார்' (பெ. புஇ 3645).

⁷⁵¹ It must be noted that the transition of *Cākkiyar nāyaṇār* who became a *Śaivite* and *Tirunāukkaracar* switching over to *Śaivism* from Jainism as 'conversions'. The idea of conversion portrayed in the *Periya Purāṇam* may seem to be a steady and gradual development as in the life of *Cēramān Perumāl* who realized the transitory nature of the worldly treasures and of his kingdom of earth. Hence, conversion is the larger world-consciousness now pressing in on the individual mind often it breaks suddenly and becomes a great new revelation. This is the first aspect of conversion: The person emerges from a smaller limited world of existence into a larger world of existence. His life becomes swallowed up in a larger purpose of life. Renunciation of the momentary pleasures and seeking lasting inner peace are the important factors of religious conversion. However, the moment the *nāyaṇmār* realize the sublime nature or divine *arul*, two kinds of experience lead their path. One, an inner transformation which is spontaneous process and the second and elevation from the empirical level to a higher realm. This idea may be substantiated from the life-portrayal of *Tirunāukkaracar*. As soon as He smeared the white ashes offered to him by his sister on his return from the Jain fold, he felt immensely free from the internal as well as external darkness. The term 'பெருவாழ்வு: *Peruvālvu*' may signify the notion of the emergence of a new life in the spiritual sphere.

⁷⁵² It is narrated that 'this was the ancient city that was ruled by king *Maṇu* who was descended from the sun ... as guardian of all earthly creatures, he was their eyes and their way of life ... by virtue of his fairness in reconciling even with his very enemies, he was known as "The Just" and crowned with the title "*Maṇunīti Dharman*" or "The Sustainer of the Moral Order". As noted in the ancient texts, he, the king, made sure that the Lord of the Vedas is worshipped and glorified in his kingdom. He steadfastly followed the path of virtue in his private, family and public life. He punished the evil doers, and with the support of the other kings, it is he who maintained the order of the world' (PP 98-102). Further, it is stated, that this king who sought justice for the mother cow which lost its calf allegedly killed by the king's son, and proclaimed 'I am the guardian of all life', and he thought to himself 'I have set myself up as the protector

நெறி) *Śaiva* way of life. *Cēkḱilār* presents *Maṇu* as the voice of an individual conscience; ‘he was their eyes and their very life’ (PP. 99)⁷⁵³. He is symbol of the truthful way of life worthy of administration and reverence; ‘he was known as “the just” and crowned with the title “*Maṇunīti*”’ (PP. 100)⁷⁵⁴, ‘He was the guardian of all life ... His rule was based on justice’ (PP. 118)⁷⁵⁵; ‘he steadfastly followed the path of virtue in his private, family and public life’ (PP 102)⁷⁵⁶; these serve as the paradigmatic source of ethics and morality – ‘what *maṇu* says is medicine’ (Crawford, 1995, p. 25). He is to be held as the icon of righteousness – ‘like king *Maṇu*, the Lord will bestow his grace on those who follow the path of virtue’ (PP. 135)⁷⁵⁷.

After having showered his praise on king *Maṇu*, what is distinctive and even more unique to the narration is that, *Cēkḱilār* goes into further detail. He underlines the fact that ‘the Lord appeared to king *Maṇu* and granted him abundant *aruḷ* (grace)’ (PP. 134)⁷⁵⁸. He is ‘the Lord of all virtue (அறவானார்: *aravāṇar*) ... He bestows his grace on those who follow the path of virtue’ (PP. 135)⁷⁵⁹. By reference to *Śiva* as *aravāṇar* (அறவானார்) i.e. the Lord of all virtue, *Cēkḱilār* first seems to affirm that *Śiva* is the

of the whole world. Eventually, my rule is based on justice’ (PP 118-119) and he ordered the death of his son. At the end of the narration *Cēkḱilār* points out that the ‘Supreme Lord, is the Lord of all virtue who dwells in the temple, sensing what had happened, the Lord appeared to king *Maṇu* and granted him abundant grace’. In a similar manner, ‘as of king *Maṇu*, the Lord will bestow his grace on those who follow the path of virtue’ (PP 130-135).

⁷⁵³ ‘மண்ணில் வாழ்தரு மன்உயிர்கட்கு எலாம் கண்ணும் ஆவியும் ஆம் பொருங்காவலன்...’ (பெ.பு. 99).

⁷⁵⁴ ‘...செற்றம் நீக்கிய செம்மையின் மெய்மனுப் பெற்ற நீதியும் தன்பெயர் ஆக்கினான்’ (பெ.பு. 100).

⁷⁵⁵ ‘மன்உயிர் புரந்து வையம் பொதுக்கடிந்து அறத்தில் நீடும் என்நெறி நன்றால் என்னும் என் செய்தால் தீரும் என்னும்...’ (பெ.பு. 118).

⁷⁵⁶ ‘அறம் பொருள் இன்பம் ஆன அறநெறி வழாமல் புல்லி மறம்கடிந்து அரசர் போற்ற...’ (பெ.பு. 102).

⁷⁵⁷ ‘இணையவகை அறநெறியில் எண் இறந்தோர்க்கு அருள்புரிந்து...’ (பெ.பு. 135).

⁷⁵⁸ ‘பொன் தயங்கு மதில் ஆருர்ப் பூங்கோயில் அமர்ந்த பிரான் வென்றி மனு வேந்தனுக்கு வீதியிலே அருள்கொடுத்துச் சென்றருளும் பெருங்கருணைத் திறம் கண்டு தன் அடியார்க்கு என்றும்எளி வரும் பெருமை ஏழ் உலகும் எடுத்து ஏத்தும்’ (பெ.பு. 134).

⁷⁵⁹ ‘...அணையதனுக்கு அகமலர் ஆம் அறவானார் பூங்கோயில்’ (பெ.பு. 135)

source of all virtues. It is in Him one has to be confirmed. It is He, secondly, *Cēkkiḷār* recounts, bestows his *aruḷ* (grace) on those who follow the path of virtue. Thirdly by placing his emphasis on *Maṇu* as one whose ‘rule was based on justice’ (PP. 118)⁷⁶⁰ and his emphasis that justice must follow the same canons for a king’s son as for the cow, and all the lowliest creatures of his state, and that any type of promise once made should be honoured, prove that love which fulfils the law does not supersede the law; it give profound meaning to life (PP. 124-127)⁷⁶¹. This whole narration shows that the path way to *Śiva* pursued by *Maṇu*, as presented in the *Periya Purāṇam*, indicates *Cēkkiḷār* emphasises the truth of the profundity of working of love in the core of one’s self and its exposition in the outward acts and words of the king and that the ‘justice’ (*நீதி: nēti*) (PP. 100)⁷⁶² followed by the king is *Śiva-nēti* (சைவ நீதி) as the norm of justice is found in *Śiva* (PP. 135)⁷⁶³. What should be noted in this episode is that *Śiva-nēti* (சிவ-நீதி) is consistent with the self-integration and self-realization of a man – one who has done, in this case *Maṇu*, what there was to be done in love upholding the *Śaiva* way of life. Hence, *Śiva-nēti* (சிவ-நீதி) revitalises the law of love and harmony and the balanced code of justice effected by the benign use of the *aruḷ* (grace) of *Śiva* externally and internally.

⁷⁶⁰ ‘மன்ஊயிர் புரந்து வையம் பொதுக்கடிந்து அறத்தில் நீடும் என்நெறி நன்றால் என்னும் என் செய்தால் தீரும் என்னும்...’ (பெ.பு. 118).

⁷⁶¹ It is narrated vividly that the king exclaimed “Let us leave on one side what you have said about past practice,” he continued, “Your argument overlooks the basic reality of justice. Tell me: where in the world has any cow with painful sighs and lamentation rung a bell like this and then collapsed? My son has taken the life of a creature born here, the home of the great Lord ... Therefore, understand this, he must be put to death. That is the drastic deed that needs to be performed. There is no other way. I cannot allay the sorrow which this cow feels in its heart. But it is right that I too should endure the pain which it has suffered.” (PP 130-135).

⁷⁶² ‘...செற்றம் நீக்கிய செம்மையின் மெய்மனுப் பெற்ற நீதியும் தன்பெயர் ஆக்கினான்’ (பெ.பு. 100).

⁷⁶³ ‘...அனையதனுக்கு அகமலர் ஆம் அறவானார் பூங்கோயில்’ (பெ.பு. 135)

In the *Periya Purāṇam* we see, therefore, that the dynamic *Śiva-nēti* (சிவநீதி) at work as the cosmic law and as the universal law. At first, *Cēkkiḷār* asserts that the entire cosmos exists in *Śiva* and his activity. He narrates *Śiva* as ‘the Lord of creation’ (PP. 136)⁷⁶⁴. Elsewhere he affirms, ‘the Lord performs his sacred dance, and so that the seven worlds may have life’ (PP. 241)⁷⁶⁵ and *Cēkkiḷār* elaborates that the *nāyaṇmār*’s ‘senses were all subsumed in the act of seeing, the four faculties of his mind in meditation, and the three qualities in pure enlightenment at the awesome sight of the Lord in his ecstatic dance’ (PP. 252)⁷⁶⁶. In this manner, *Cēkkiḷār* asserts that the world is created, sustained and guarded from divisive evil effects by *Śiva*, to lead all humanity to the just path and thereby reach unalloyed bliss, through his ‘act’ of dancing: ‘the act, the agent, the fruit of action and the one who bonds the fruit of action to the agent: he learnt that these four basic elements constitute the reality’ (PP. (PP. 3645)⁷⁶⁷. The cosmos is identified with the ‘act’ of *Śiva* and seeing such a divine ‘act’ not only discharges an ultimate aspiration but it also carries within it a moral injunction, to ‘act’ humanly because ‘action’ is the fundamental aspect and the law of human nature (PP. 2728, 2733, 2735, 2738)⁷⁶⁸. The

⁷⁶⁴ ‘ஆதி தேவர்...’ (பெ.பு. 136).

⁷⁶⁵ ‘இடம் மருங்கு தனிநாயகி காண ஏழ்பெரும் புவனம் உய்ய எடுத்து நடம் நவின்றருள் சிலம்பு ஒலிபோற்றும்...’ (பெ.பு. 241).

⁷⁶⁶ ‘ஐந்துபேர் அறிவும் கண்களே கொள்ள அளப்பு அரும் கரணங்கள் நான்கும் சிந்தையே ஆகக் குணம் ஒரு மூன்றும் திருந்து சாத்துவிகமே ஆக இந்துவாழ் சடையான் ஆடும் ஆனந்த எல்லைஇல் தனிப்பெருங் கூத்தின் வந்தபேர் இன்ப வெள்ளத்துள் திளைத்து மாறுஇலா மகிழ்ச்சியில் மலர்ந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 252).

⁷⁶⁷ ‘செய்வினையும் செய்வானும் அதன் பயனும் கொடுப்பானும் மெய்வகையால் நான்கு ஆகும் விதித்த பொருள் எனக்கொண்டே இவ்இயல்பு சைவநெறி அல்லவற்றுக்கு இல்லை என உய்வகையால் பொருள் சிவன் என்று அருளாலே உணர்ந்து அறிந்தார்’ (பெ. புஇ 3645).

⁷⁶⁸ “‘He is hard to see’ ... But for those who seek him love, he grants His vision...’ (PP. 2728) ‘... He will dispel their darkness of falsehood and of action, good and bad’ (PP. 2733) ‘The primal Lord bestows His grace on those whom he has made his own ...’ (PP. 2735) ‘...He shines as the light within the hearts of those who love Him’ (PP. 2738).

‘அரிய காட்சியார் ... அன்பினில் காண்பவர்க்கு உண்மையாம் பெரியநல் அடையாளங்கள் பேசினார்’ (பெ.பு. 2728) ‘...இருவினைப் பொய்ம்மைவல் இருள் போக்குவர் என்றதாம்’ (பெ.பு. 2733) ‘ஆதி ஆள்பால் அவர்க்கு அருளும்திற்’ (பெ.பு. 2735) ‘...அன்பில் ஊன்று உள்எழும் சோதியாய் நின்றனன்’ (பெ.பு. 2738).

worship of God has no spiritual-moral worth, unless it is accompanied by a practical realization of Him in all creatures.

In addition to establishing a theological basis for the performance of moral action (நன்னெறி: *nanneri*), what is important to *Cēkkiḷār* is that he underlines that morality is founded on a particular attitude to life in which one ‘ought’ to ‘act’ humanly in order to live in harmony with the divine ‘act’. It is for this reason *Cēkkiḷār* declares that *Śiva* is the ruler of all (PP. 2735)⁷⁶⁹ who dances and he dances for the sake of the world, and they reveal the working of his grace (*aruḷ*) (PP. 2741)⁷⁷⁰. Therefore, one needs to take responsibility for one’s actions and must concentrate on discipline of action to cultivate virtue. In other words *Cēkkiḷār* affirms that *Śiva* has given free will and that one is accountable to *Śiva* for one’s thoughts and actions. One’s freedom has to be balanced with responsibility. In a novel way, *Cēkkiḷār* emphasises his point through the story of *Cuntarar* (PP. 147-349)⁷⁷¹.

⁷⁶⁹ ‘ஆதி ஆள்பால் அவர்க்கு அருளும்பிறம் நாதன் மாட்சிமை கேட்க நவிலுங்கால் ஓதும் எல்லை உவப்பு இலஆதலின் யாதும் ஆராய்ச்சி இல்லையாம் என்றதாம்’ (பெ.பு. 2735)

“The primal Lord bestows his grace on those whom he has made his own” – on enquiry, the glory of the Lord proves to be without end or limit (PP. 2735).

⁷⁷⁰ ஆடும் எனஆம் திருப்பாட்டின் ... உலகுக்கு இவை செய்தது ஈசர் கடும் கருணைத்திறம்...’ (பெ.பு. 2741).

⁷⁷¹ It is stated: ‘when the Lord saw what had happened, he said to *Cuntarar*, “since you have lost your heart to these ladies, you will be born in the south country. There you will fall in love with these women, and take your pleasure with them. Then you will return to this place”’ (PP 37). On another occasion he reports ‘their love for the Lord is the greatest blessing of their lives. They have learned and practised faultlessly the four duties of the *Śaivite* path. They are steadfast in charity and penance, and impeccable in doing what is right. Their lives are marked by modesty, patience, and domestic virtue and are acclaimed by all. They are noble in conduct, humble in spirit and are godlike in character (PP 356-357). The two episodes narrated reveal that though ‘the act, the agent, the fruit of action and the one who bonds the fruit of action to the agent’ (PP 3645) of the Lord, one has the free will to decide one’s course of action. One has the capacity to decide the fate of one’s own self – that one’s action could condition one’s future nature. One’s present condition, is at present, is due to the consequences of one’s past action, and all that one does carries ‘residues’, that will determine one’s next life.

The important thing to consider here is that *Cēkkiḷār* seems to emphasize that one is always in a state of becoming, and that action breeds temperament: He extols the beauty, the glory, the certitude, the grandeur, the magnitude of *Śiva*, all-pervading, yet domiciling in grace ineffable in the depths of the self of the *nāyaṇmār* animating the true lovers and servitors with the infinitude of love unto his most gracious feet (PP. 4162)⁷⁷². It is stated ‘their love for the Lord is the greatest blessing of their lives’ (PP. 355)⁷⁷³. This ensures that good actions form an inner transformation. It cultivates new virtues bringing one to moral transformation (PP. 357)⁷⁷⁴.

Moral living (நன்னெறி: *nanṇeri*), therefore, in the *Periya Purāṇam* is not a matter of personal concern, it elevates one to a new level of transformation where one is related to self and others, with a new personality, ethical dynamism, responsibility and status: ‘they are steadfast in charity and penance, and impeccable in doing what is right’ (PP. 356)⁷⁷⁵. A good moral action is the reflection of the inner moral character. It brings both individual and social transformation and maintains order in the world. In other words, the action of a morally good person brings true knowledge and love and it liberates one and others. In other words, the action of a good person is prompted by the will to serve others selflessly. In the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkkiḷār* attempts to reinforce the holistic nature of human ‘action’, framing the human action within a larger divine action. The emphasis on

⁷⁷² ‘...அடித்தொண்டின் வழி அடைந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 4162).

⁷⁷³ ‘...பெறுவது சிவன்பால் அன்பாம் பேறு எனப் பெருகி வாழ்வார்’ (பெ.பு. 355).

⁷⁷⁴ ‘செம்மையால் தணிந்த சிந்தைத் தெய்வ வேதியர்கள் ஆனார் மும்மை ஆயிரவர் தாங்கள் போற்றிட முதல்வனாரை இம்மையே பெற்று வாழ்வார் இனிப்பெறும் பேறு ஒன்று இல்லார் தம்மையே தமக்கு ஒப்பான நிலைமையால் தலைமை சார்ந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 357)

‘They are noble in conduct, humble in spirit, and godlike in character. In this way they have attained the first of all things, made him the object of their worship. In the future, there is no further goal left for them to attain. They remain without rival, without peer’ (PP. 357).

⁷⁷⁵ ‘...தானமும் தவமும் வல்லார் தகுதியின் பகுதி சார்ந்தார்...’ (பெ.பு. 356).

the moral life is nowhere more poignantly related than in the narration of the lives of *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṭṭār nāyaṇār* (PP 1722-1787)⁷⁷⁶ and *Tirunīlakaṇṭar nāyaṇār* (PP. 360-403)⁷⁷⁷. These episodes seem to emphasise that a morally good person is one who lives virtuously. Moral virtues provide a framework of mind to influence the kind of deed a good person will seek to perform. In this way, morality is established as a path related to the whole of one's *Śaiva*-way of life, rather than as specified actions.

8.3 The Mystical Nature of Moral living in the *Periya Purāṇam*

It would seem that for *Cēkkiḷār*, what is significant in *nāyaṇār*'s moral path is their total reliance on *Śiva*'s *aruḷ* (grace) for their moral discernment and disposition, and the insistence on love (*anpu*: அன்பு) as the most universal and significant of spiritual force (PP. 2733-2736)⁷⁷⁸. Elsewhere *Cēkkiḷār* notes that those who saw the enactment of *Śiva*'s vision or truth were convinced that true wisdom consists in loving God [(ஞானம்

⁷⁷⁶ In the narration of the life *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṭṭār*, *Cēkkiḷār* narrates the story of a devotional woman who with profound fidelity, did all of her duties that pertain to her family life – and did deeds of admirable service with overwhelming love for the devotees of the Lord. Even when calamity struck her family in the infidelity of her husband, she kept the family values with the highest integrity and continued the good deeds of helping the servants of the Lord. When the Lord asked, what she wanted as a reward for her life of virtue and integrity, she interceded for 'immortal blissful love', the highest ideal of life.

⁷⁷⁷ *Cēkkiḷār* recounts that *Tirunīlakaṇṭar* was always enthusiastic in serving the Lord. Never did he contemplate contradicting his Lord's words. He kept the disciplines of married life and had an ardent desire to engage in humble service. Yet, blinded by carnal desire, he gave himself to a lady of disrepute. Then realizing the mistake he had committed, he vowed to his wife to uphold the right values of life. At the end of the narration, *Cēkkiḷār* relates the story that 'the God of gods ... who visits the homes of all his devotees and reveals their spiritual achievement to the world. Now in grace he said to the *nāyaṇār* and his wife, "you have gained a splendid victory over the five senses ... come and abide with us in bliss"' (PP 1401). *Cēkkiḷār* ends by noting that 'to the best of my ability I have celebrated the single-minded servant of the Lord, who kept the vow that he had made to the Lord' (PP. 403).

⁷⁷⁸ In this verses *Cēkkiḷār* warns all to abjure from logical disputes and controversies as barren intellects cannot prove the immensity of *Śiva*:

'... *Sankaran* cannot be measured by logic or analogy' (PP. 2735)

'...ஓதும் எல்லை உவப்பு இல ஆதலின் யாதும் ஆராய்ச்சி இல்லையாம் என்றதாம்' (பெ.பு. 2735).

But for those who seek Him in love, *Cēkkiḷār* notes '... He shines as a light ...' ('... உள்ளும் சோதியாய் நின்றனன்...') (PP. 2738). Therefore, '... in love enshrine within your heart is radiance' ('... ஆதிச்சுடர் சோதியை அன்பின் அகத்துள் ஆக்கிப்...') (PP. 2739). To those 'who seek Him in love, He grants the vision of Himself' ('...உரிய அன்பினில் காண்பவர்க்கு உண்மையாம் பெரியநல் அமையாளங்கள் பேசினார்') (PP. 2729).

ஈசன்பால் அன்பே: *jñānam īcaṇ pāl anpē* (PP. 2746)]. Hence, *Cēkkiḷār* lays great stress on the inner attitude of a devotee, whereby the heart and mind in unison can be directed to the light of *Śiva* to blossom in love (PP. 1431, 2739)⁷⁷⁹.

To elaborate further, *Cēkkiḷār* describes that *Tirunāvukkaracar*'s perception of the benign smile of the Lord at *Tillai* and the attraction of the Lord's eye that gave rise to love in the heart of the devotee (PP. 1436)⁷⁸⁰. Therefore, a goal of unification radiates from the heart of the devotee which is the centre of love, and the attraction exercised on each part of the devotee's self exerts a pull towards *Śiva* (PP.1437)⁷⁸¹. This blossom of love as noted also suffused all the other devotees of *Śiva* in the *Periya Purāṇam*. The *nāyaṇmār* transmitted the invisible power of *Śiva*'s love as occasions demanded to relieve the suffering of their fellow devotees, and testified to the greatness of *Śiva* who takes up his abode in the local temples as well as in the temple of the heart of devotees (PP.1439)⁷⁸². As a result of his constant contemplation of the invincible power of *Śiva*'s *aruḷ* (grace) symbolised by the lotus feet of *Śiva*, a supreme knowledge of *Śiva* filled

⁷⁷⁹ '...நெஞ்சில் பெருகிய மகிழ்வும் காதலும் நிறை அன்பொடும் உரைதடுமாறச்...' (பெ.பு. 1431)
'...As joy and longing and love together welled up in his grace-touched heart, he could scarcely speak...' (PP. 1431).

'... in love enshrine within your heart is radiance' ('... ஆதிச்சுடர் சோதியை அன்பின் அகத்துள் ஆக்கிப்...') (PP. 2739).

⁷⁸⁰ '...கூடும் படிவரும் அன்பால் இன்பு உறு குணம்முன்...' (பெ.பு. 1436).

'...Now that he saw it before his very eyes, he attained a state of loving bliss...' (PP. 1436)

⁷⁸¹ 'கையுத் தலைமிசை புனை அஞ்சலியன கண்ணும் பொழிமழை ஒழியாதே பெய்யும் தகையன கரணங்களும் உடன் உருகும் பரிவின பேறு எய்தும் மெய்யும் தரைமிசை விழும் முன்பு எழுதரும் மின்தாழ் சடையொடு நின்று ஆடும் ... (பெ.பு. 1437).

Cēkkiḷār notes as he offered worship with his hands placed on his head, from his eyes the tears poured down without remission. All his faculties were dissolved in love. In ecstasy his body kept falling to the ground...' (PP. 1437)

⁷⁸² '...கைத் திருத்தொண்டு செய்யும் காதலில் பணிந்து போந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 1439).

'...Then desiring to offer to the Lord the service of his hands as well, he bowed low and went his way' (PP. 1439).

Tirunāvukkaracar to the exclusion of all other preoccupation (PP.1441, 1443)⁷⁸³. It is the pure awareness of *Śiva*'s *aruḷ* (grace) that led *Tirunāvukkaracar* to carry his service to others.

It is for this reason *Cēkkiḷār* narrates that caressed by a heaving love to have a vision of *Śiva* in His abode of Mount *Kailas*, the *nāyaṇār* further makes his pilgrimage on foot from the south to north, traversing jungles, cities and hilly tracts and crossing rivers, till he feels completely exhausted (PP. 1620)⁷⁸⁴. There he was empowered to enjoy the vision of Lord. The *nāyaṇār* saw creation move in the forms of *Śiva* and His consort *Sakti*. The creator and the creative matrix moved in unison (PP. 1639)⁷⁸⁵. It was the moving pageant of the phenomena of life – the One in the Many. The One remains; the Many change and pass away (PP. 1652)⁷⁸⁶. The vision of the one in many was

⁷⁸³ ‘அருள் பெரு மகிழ்ச்சி பொங்க அன்னம் பாலிக்கும் என்னும் திருக்குறுந்தொகைகள் பாடித் திரு உழவாரம் கொண்டு பெருத்து எழு காதலோடும் பெருந்திருத்தொண்டு செய்து...’ (பெ.பு. 1443). ‘In joyful gratitude for grace, he sang the hymn “Ambrosia they receive”, and taking up his hoe continued his scared service with mounting devotion’ and then again he ‘felt at the feet of the Lord, and the hymns’ (PP. 1443). *Cēkkiḷār* further states though he endured hardships ‘never did his love and longing to see the Lord waver in the slightest’ (PP. 1629) ‘... His body mind was firmly set on the anklet-ringed feet of the Lord of *Kailāsa*...’ (PP. 1630). ‘நேர்வரும் குறி நினை சிந்தையின் நேசம் நீடு ஆர்வம் அங்கு உயிர்கொண்டு உகைக்கும் உடம்பு அடங்கவும் ஊன் கெடச்’ (பெ.பு. 1629) ‘...செப்பு அரும் கயிலைச் சிலம்பு அடி சிந்தை சென்று...’ (பெ.பு. 1630).

⁷⁸⁴ ‘...செம்மல் வெண்கயிலைப் பொருப்பை நினைந்து எழுந்ததொர் சிந்தையால் எம்மருங்கும் ஓர் காதல் இன்றி ... கடந்து கன்னடம் எய்தினார்’ (பெ.பு. 1620).

‘From there *Tirunāvukkaracar* moved on, thinking of nothing else than snow-grit Mount *Kailāsa*, the dwelling place of the Lord’ (PP. 1620).

⁷⁸⁵ ‘பொன்மலைக் கொடியுடன் அமர்வெள்ளி அம்பொருப்பில் தன்மை ஆம்படி சத்தியும் சிவமும் ஆம் சரிதைப் பன்மையோனிகள் யாவையும் பயில்வன பணிந்தே மன்னும் மாதவர் தம்பிரான் கோவில் முன் வந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 1644).

‘Just as the Lord dwells on the silver mountain beside his consort, so the great ascetic beheld all the different kinds of creatures in the form of *Śiva* and *Skati* together. Having bowed in worship before the vision, he approached the temple of his Lord’ (PP. 1644).

⁷⁸⁶ ‘ஆயவாறு மற்று அவர்மனம் களிப்பு உறக்கயிலை மேய நாதர் தம் துணையொடும் வீற்றிருந்தருளித் தூய தொண்டரும் தொழுது எதிர் நிற்க அக்கோலம் சேயது ஆக்கினார் திருஐயாறு அமர்ந்தமை திகழ’ (பெ.பு. 1652).

‘Then as *Śiva*'s holy servant stood rapt in worship before him, the Lord of *Kailāsa* with his consort revealed to him there in *Tiruvaiyārru* from exactly as it is on *Mount Kailāsa*’ (PP. 1652)

vouchsafed to *Tirunāvukkaracar*. He saw *Śiva* in everything and everything in *Śiva* [(சிவனே எல்லாப் பொருளும் என்று : *Civaṇē ellāp poruḷum enru* (PP. 2750)].

The power of his love of *Śiva* and the knowledge and the vision of *Śiva* domiciling in everything was so strong that it effected the necessary transformation in *Tirunāvukkaracar*. His love reached to an immeasurable height in this experience of the Truth of *Śiva* which *Cēkkiḷār* articulates beautifully in the poem (PP. 1651)⁷⁸⁷. The magnetic contact of love from the centre of the universe i.e. *Śiva* with the power hidden in the unbounded depth of the heart of such devotee like *Tirunāvukkaracar* through affinity ensures a centre of unification, what *Cēkkiḷār* calls as loving bliss (PP.1436)⁷⁸⁸. Love transforms all and converges on an all-embracing one which unites all in *Śiva*. It is in this spring of unfettered love that these minstrels of *Śiva* relished the nectar of His *aruḷ* (grace) (PP.1403)⁷⁸⁹. The *nāyaṇmār* experienced profound attraction to *Śiva*, who abides in the hearts of all who sought Him as in temple and natural abodes in the wide universe (PP. 2449)⁷⁹⁰.

In exquisite imagery and poetic diction, *Cēkkiḷār* makes one witness the coalescence of the two brilliant seers or the *nāyaṇmār* i.e. *Campantar* and

⁷⁸⁷ ‘முன்பு கண்டு கொண்டு அருளின் ஆர் அமுது உண்ண மூவா அன்பு பெற்றவர் அளவிலா ஆர்வம் முன் பொங்கப் பொன் பிறங்கிய சடையரைப் போற்று தாண்டகங்கள் இன்பம் ஓங்கிட ஏத்தினார் எல்லை இல்தவத்தோர்’ (பெ.பு. 1651).

‘When *Tirunāvukkaracar* saw the Lord before his own eyes and tasted the nectar of his grace, imperishable love and immeasurable longing arose within him. In his joy, the great ascetic sang hymns in praise of the Lord, and is heart exulted’ (PP. 1651).

⁷⁸⁸ ‘... கூடும் படிவரும் அன்பால் இன்பு உறு குணம்முன் பெறவரும் நிலைகூடத் ...’ (பெ.பு. 1436).

⁷⁸⁹ ‘...அன்புற விழுந்து எழுந்து அருள் நெறி விளங்கப்பாடுவார்...’ (பெ.பு. 1403).

‘...Then he rose again in love and began to sing the praise of *Śiva* and his path of grace’ (PP. 1403).

⁷⁹⁰ ‘... ஆடிய சேவடிகள் ஆர்வம்உற உள்கொண்டு மாடுஉயர் கோயில் புறத்து அரிது வந்து அணைந்ததர்’ (பெ.பு. 2449).

‘...At last, reluctantly he left the temple, with the Lord’s feet enshrined within his heart’ (PP. 2449).

Tirunāvukkaracar, at the sacred temple of *Tiruttōṇpuram* (PP. 1452, 1453)⁷⁹¹. It was not mere confrontation of a younger truth seer i.e. *Campantar* meeting an elder servitor of *Śiva* i.e. *Tirunāvukkaracar*. Their spiritual animation and love of *Śiva* blazed in radiance in their gleaming countenance with holy ash and *Rudra* beads, in the Five-letter-Prayer they chanted continuously connoting the *Śiva*'s name and in the vivifying currents of faith of the devotees who followed them. The self-fulfilment seen in *Campantar* and the self-denial of *Tirunāvukkaracar* converged in mid-point and blazed a trail of complete interaction of two-in-one *anbe-Śivam* (அன்பே சிவம்) (PP. 1454)⁷⁹². Love of God implied love of others, and generated currents of power to unite all in its embrace (PP. 1455)⁷⁹³.

⁷⁹¹ தொழுது அணைவுற்று ஆண்ட அரசு அன்புஉருகத் தொண்டர் குழாத்து இடையே சென்று பழுதுஇல் பெருங்காதலுடன் அடிபணியப் பணிந்து அவர்தம் கரங்கள் பற்றி எழுது அரிய மலர்க்கையால் எடுத்து இறைஞ்சி விடையின் மேல் வருவார் தம்மை அமுது அழைத்துக் கொண்டவர்தாம் அப்பரே என அவரும் அடியேன் என்றார்' (பெ.பு. 1452)

'Surrounded by his band of devotees and moved by deep affection. *Tirunāvukkaracar* came forward and made obeisance at *Campantar*'s feet. He in turn, invoking the Lord with tears, took *Aracar*'s hands on his, and addressed him simply as "My Father". "I am your servant", *Aracar* replied' (PP. 1452).

‘...எம்பெருமக்களும் இயைந்த கூட்டத்தில் அரசன்அடியார் இன்பம் எய்தி உம்பர்களும் போற்றிசைப்பச் சிவம் பெருகும் ஒலிநிறைந்தார் உலகம் எல்லாம்’ (பெ.பு. 1453).

‘...seeing their union, the servants of Haran were enjoyed, and the gods sung *Śiva*'s praise so that the whole world was filled with the sound’ (PP. 1453).

⁷⁹² ‘உள்ளம் நிறை காதலினால் ஒருவர் ஒருவரில் கலந்த உண்மையோடும் வெள்ளநீர்த் திருத்தோணி வீற்றிருந்தார் கழல் வணங்கும் விருப்பின்மிக்கார்’ (பெ.பு. 1454).

‘...So the two of them were bound to one another in genuine and heartfelt love, and together conceived the desire to worship the feet of His who sits in state at well-watered *Tiruttōṇpuram*.

⁷⁹³ In a beautiful stanza, *Cēkkilār* delineates the evolving world its dense obscurities and the two most intimate lovers of *Śiva* - *Campantar* and *Tirunāvukkaracar* in the unity of one-pointed consciousness. In this case *Cēkkilār* did not see two seers! The love energy of *Śiva* in *Sakti*, the moving principle of grace, clears the clouds of unknowing before the unifying and unanimous vision of truth perceived by the child of wisdom i.e. *Campantar* and noble *Tirunāvukkaracar* at the *Vedaranyam* temple:

‘அருள் பெருகு தனிக்கடலும் உலகுக்கு எல்லாம் அன்பு செறி கடலுமாம் எனவும் ஓங்கும் பொருள்சமய முதல்சைவ நெறிதான் பெற்று புண்ணியக் கண் இரண்டு எனவும் புவனம் உய்ய இருள் கடுஉண்டவர் அருளும் அகிலம் எல்லாம் ஈன்றாள் தன் திருவருளும் எனவும் கூடித் தெருள் கலைஞானக் கன்றும் அரசும் சென்று செஞ்சடை யானவர் கோயில் சார்ந்தார் அன்றே’ (பெ.பு. 1455).

‘...They were like an incomparable sea of grace, an ocean of love for all the world; or like a sacred pair of eyes for the way of *Śiva*, the first among religions; or the very embodiment of the grace of Him who drank the dark poison to save the world and the grace of her who gave birth to all the world’ (PP. 1455). It is also stated that both of these *nāyaṇmār* stepped into divine presence in crescendo of love ineffable and experienced the bliss of *Śiva*. Two of them were bound to one another in genuine and heartfelt love, and together conceived the desire to worship the feet of him...’ (PP. 1454)

‘... உள்ளம் நிறை காதலினால் ஒருவர் ஒருவரில் கலந்த உண்மையோடும் வெள்ளநீர்த் திருத்தோணி வீற்றிருந்தார் கழல் வணங்கும் விருப்பின்மிக்கார்’ (பெ.பு. 1454).

In the beautiful stanza, *Cēkkiḷār* delineates the evolving world with its dense obscurities and the two most intimate lovers of *Śiva*, *Campantar* and *Tirunāvukkaracar* in the unity of one-pointed consciousness. In this case *Cēkkiḷār* did not see two seers! The love of *Śiva* in *Sakti*, the moving principle of *aruḷ* (grace), clears the clouds of unknowing before the unifying and unanimous vision of truth perceived by the child of wisdom i.e. *Campantar* and the royal *Tirunāvukkaracar* at the *Tiruttōṇpuram* temple. In these verses truly one sees that both the *nāyaṇmār* were stepped into *Śiva*'s presence in a crescendo of love ineffable and experienced the bliss of *Śivanandam* (சிவ ஆனந்தம்) i.e. the bliss of abiding in *Śiva*. *Tirunāvukkaracar* in the course of his eventful life spiritualized the practice of '*Śiva-toṇṭu*' (சிவ தொண்டு) work as worship of *Śiva* and enlightened many seekers like *Appūti* to experience divine love as the goal and fulfilment of life (PP.1469-1483). It was the power and efficacy of love *Śiva* that made him wake up *Appūti* eldest son from the sleep of death as well as bequeath to the world the legacy of his mellifluous sons in three anthologies.

The episode of *Campantar* and *Tirunāvukkaracar* also shows that *Cēkkiḷār* gives pre-eminence to these two *nāyaṇmār* for upholding the unity of all things in *Śiva* and recovering the faith of the common people in the inter-linked relationship of a devotee with *Śiva*. We see the unity of all things in *Śiva*, revealing their inter-links and inter-relationships in several gradations (PP.1423)⁷⁹⁴. This heightening love unto *Śiva* and his

⁷⁹⁴ 'முருகின் செறிஇதழ் முளரிப் படுகளில் முதுமே திகள்பொது மலர்மேயும் அருகில் செறிவனம் எனமிக்கு உயிர்கழை அளவில் பெருகிட வளர் இக்குப் பெருகிப் புடை முதிர் தரளம் சொரிவன பெரியோர் அவர்திரு வடிவைக் கண்டு உருகிப் பரிவு உறு புனல்கள் பொழிவன என முன்பு உளவள வயல் எங்கும்' (பெ.பு. 1428)

'In those pools thick with scented lotus petals, buffaloes grazed on the flesh blossoms. Nearby, the sugar cane grew thick and tall as bamboo in the forest, and pearls dropped from the rings around its stems. All

devotees of manifested as union with and compassion for all living creatures is a teaching in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 1454-1455)⁷⁹⁵. On the attainment of inseparable union with *Śiva*, one attains likeness of *Śiva* i.e. *Śiva-gathi* or they become the ‘persons’ of *Śiva* (PP. 1692)⁷⁹⁶ is the ultimate goal of the *nāyaṇmār*. The light within them illumine and by *aruḷ* (grace) vibrates the resplendence of *Śiva* and the *nāyaṇār* experience the coming in of blissful communion (PP.1651)⁷⁹⁷.

In this narration it is clear *Cēkkiḷār* was absolutely convinced of the natural unity or oneness that underlies and binds all living creatures together and *Cēkkiḷār* emphasises clearly his reasons for this conviction (PP. 2723)⁷⁹⁸. The Lord was accessible to all who sought him with earnest love therefore they stressed that the goal of realisation *Śiva* had

nature saw the great one approaching through the fertile fields, and overcome with feeling, shed tears of love’ (PP. 1428).

⁷⁹⁵ It is stated:

‘அருள் பெருகு தனிக்கடலும் உலகுக்கு எல்லாம் அன்பு செறி கடலுமாம் எனவும் ஓங்கும் பொருள்சமய முதல்சைவ நெறிதான் பெற்று புண்ணியக் கண் இரண்டு எனவும் புவனம் உய்ய இருள் கடுஉண்டவர் அருளும் அகிலம் எல்லாம் ஈன்றாள் தன் திருவருளும் எனவும் கூடித் தெருள் கலைஞானக் கன்றும் அரசும் சென்று செஞ்சடை யானவர் கோயில் சார்ந்தார் அன்றே’ (பெ.பு. 1455).

‘...They were like an incomparable sea of grace, an ocean of love for all the world; or like a sacred pair of eyes for the way of *Śiva*, the first among religions; or the very embodiment of the grace of Him who drank the dark poison to save the world and the grace of her who gave birth to all the world’ (PP. 1455).

It is also stated that both of these *nāyaṇmār* stepped into divine presence in a crescendo of love ineffable and experienced the bliss of *Śiva*. Two of them were bound to one another in genuine and heartfelt love, and together conceived the desire to worship the feet of him...’ (PP. 1454)

‘... உள்ளம் நிறை காதலினால் ஒருவர் ஒருவரில் கலந்த உண்மையோடும் வெள்ளநீர்த் திருத்தோணி வீற்றிருந்தார் சுழல் வணங்கும் விருப்பின்மிக்கார்’ (பெ.பு. 1454).

⁷⁹⁶ ‘...நண்அரிய சிவானந்த ஞானவடிவே ஆகி அண்ணலார் சேவடிக்கீழ் ஆண்ட அரசு அமர்ந்திருந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 1697).

‘...Then *Tirunāvukkaracar* was transformed into the likeness of *Śiva*’s joy and wisdom, the ultimate attainment, and he reposed beneath the feet of the great God’ (PP. 1697)

⁷⁹⁷ ‘முன்பு கண்டு கொண்டு அருளின் ஆர் அமுது உண்ண மூவா அன்பு பெற்றவர் அளவிலா ஆர்வம் முன் பொங்கப் பொன் பிறங்கிய சடையரைப் போற்று தாண்டகங்கள் இன்பம் ஓங்கிட ஏத்தினார் எல்லை இல்தவத்தோர்’ (பெ.பு. 1651).

‘When *Tirunāvukkaracar* saw the Lord before his own eyes and tasted the nectar of his grace, imperishable love and immeasurable longing arose within him. In his joy, the great ascetic sang hymns in praise of the Lord, and his heart exulted’ (PP. 1651).

⁷⁹⁸ ‘...நிலவுமெய்ந்நெறி சிவநெறி என்பதும்...’ (பெ.பு. 2723).

its social relevance (PP. 1369)⁷⁹⁹. The co-relationship of a devotee and *Śiva* should lead to harmonious relationships with others and develop virtues of justice, tolerance, and magnanimity. In the episode of *Campantar* and *Tirunāvukkaracar*, *Cēkkiḷār* also lays great stress on the gravity of inner attitudes of devotees, whereby the heart and the mind in unison can be directed to the light of *Śiva* to blossom in love. For example, *Cuntarar* responds to the bidding of *Śiva* to extol the holy servants of Him and the *nāyaṇār* is filled with meeting love towards the holy band of *Śiva* votaries and takes the pledge of loyal service to each of these mighty warriors.

In order to express clearly his view about the unity of all living creatures in the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkkiḷār* declares that for ‘the redemption of the lives that abide in all the seven world; He [the Lord] dances therefore the world would have life’ (PP. 241)⁸⁰⁰ and ‘the cosmos may thrive (PP. 251)⁸⁰¹. *Cēkkiḷār* further notes that seeing the Lord’s dance is the highest religious or mystical experience (PP. 252)⁸⁰² and that the *nāyaṇār* exclaimed that ‘the life on earth is to me is pure and sweet, as I have been blessed to behold Your dance divine’ (PP. 253)⁸⁰³. In another instance *Cēkkiḷār* narrates that ‘the Lord who dances in the sacred court for all to see, the subtle one to be meditated with knowledge, in order to display to the world the generosity of His servant took the

⁷⁹⁹ ‘...பேச இனி யானை உலகு ஆளுடைய பிஞ்ஞகனை ஈசனை எம் பெருமானை எவ்வுயிருக்கும் தருவானை ஆசையில் ஆரா அமுதை’ (பெ.பு. 1369).
‘...He is kindly to those who call upon Him... He is God, the great one, who gives life to all’ (PP. 1369).

⁸⁰⁰ ‘ஏழ்பெரும் புவனம் உய்ய எடுத்து நடம் நவின்றருள் சிலம்பு ...’ (பெ.பு. 241)

⁸⁰¹ ‘வையகம் பொலிய மறைசிலம்பு ஆர்ப்ப...’ (பெ.பு. 251).

⁸⁰² ஐந்துபேர் அறிவும் கண்களே கொள்ள அளப்பு அரும் கரணங்கள் நான்கும் சிந்தையே ஆகக் குணம் ஒரு மூன்றும் திருந்து சாத்துவிகமே ஆக இந்துவாழ் சடையான் ஆடும் ஆனந்த எல்லைஇல் தனிப்பொருள் கூத்தின் வந்தபேர் இன்ப வெள்ளத்துள் திளைத்து மாறுஇலா மகிழ்ச்சியில் மலர்ந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 252).

⁸⁰³ ‘... உன்தன் திருநடம் கும்பிடப் பெற்று மண்ணிலேவந்த பிறவியே எனக்கு வாலிது ஆம் இன்பம்’ (பெ.பு. 253).

disguise of a Brahmin' (PP. 407)⁸⁰⁴ and 'God did these things for the sake of the world, and they reveal the working of His grace' (PP. 2741)⁸⁰⁵.

It should be pointed that the concept of 'Dance' ('நடநவின் அருள்: *naṭanaviṇru aruḷ*, ஆடும்: *āṭum*, திருநடம்: *Tirunaṭam*) employed here in reference to *Śiva* unfolds the mystery Him as 'first of all realities, endless one' (முடியா முதலாய்: *muṭiyā mutalāy*). Further the emphasis that *Śiva* 'dances', therefore, 'the world would have life' (PP. 241)⁸⁰⁶ and the assertion that *Śiva* took the 'disguise of a Brahmin' (PP. 407)⁸⁰⁷ points to the fact of *Cēkkiḷār* affirmation of the *nāyaṇmār*'s belief that *Śiva* domiciles on earth 'for all to see' [(வெளியே அம்பலத்துகள் நின்று ஆடுவார் உம்பர்: *veḷiyē ampalattuḷ ninru āṭuvār umpar*)(PP.407)] and that He i.e. *Śiva* is all in all' [(சிவனே எல்லாப் பொருளும் என்று : *Śivanē ellāp poruḷum enru* (PP. 2750)]⁸⁰⁸; there is a unity of oneness in him that naturally exists among all living creatures. This is significant to *Saiva* moral path and *Cēkkiḷār* elaborates it through the lives of the *nāyaṇmār*. This unity is both an ideal and an actuality. Not only does *Cēkkiḷār* find the ontological ground for the unity of all living creatures in *Śiva*, but on this ontological ground, he challenges one to overcome all that impedes this unity by expressing and manifesting itself in an inter-personal, existential level. *Cēkkiḷār* points out 'for those who meditate on him as one true shining light, he

⁸⁰⁴ 'ஆயும் நுண்பொருள் ஆகியும் வெளியே அம்பலத்துகள் நின்று ஆடுவார் உம்பர் ... தூர்த்த வேடமும் தோன்ற வேதியர்ஆய் மாய வண்ணமே கொண்டுதம் தொண்டர் முாறாத வண்ணமும் காட்டுவான் வந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 407).

⁸⁰⁵ ஆடும் எனஆம் திருப்பாட்டின் அமைத்த மூன்றும் நீடும்புகழோ பிறர்துன்பம் நீத்தற்கோ என்று தேடும் உணாவீர் உலகுக்கு இவை செய்தது ஈசர் கூடும் கருணைத்திறம் என்றனர் கொள்கை மேலார்' (பெ.பு. 2741).

⁸⁰⁶ 'ஏழ்பெரும் புவனம் உய்ய எடுத்து நடம் நவின்றருள் சிலம்பு ...' (பெ.பு. 241)

⁸⁰⁷ 'ஆயும் நுண்பொருள் ஆகியும் வெளியே அம்பலத்துகள் நின்று ஆடுவார் உம்பர் ... தூர்த்த வேடமும் தோன்ற வேதியர்ஆய் மாய வண்ணமே கொண்டுதம் தொண்டர் முாறாத வண்ணமும் காட்டுவான் வந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 407).

⁸⁰⁸ It is also narrated on another occasion by *Cēkkiḷār* that *Śiva* who is formless has taken several forms and has become everything.

'அருஆகி உருஆகி அனைத்தும் ஆய்நின்றபிரான்...' (பெ.பு. 4163).

dispels the darkness of falsehood of action' (PP. 2734)⁸⁰⁹; they will live in love enshrined within their hearts the primal radiance, live with their attention focused on the teaching, and so escape from the bondage of separate existence and the road that leads to rebirth' (PP. 2740)⁸¹⁰. In short, there is nothing beyond the vision of truth.

As for the ontological ground of the oneness or unity of all living beings, *Cēkkiḷār* again stresses, in the *Periya Purāṇam*, that this natural condition of all reality is because of *Śiva* (PP. 1369)⁸¹¹. *Cēkkiḷār* provides solid reasons as to why one 'ought' to treat all beings as one. For example, in one place he affirms that it is the hearts of those who treat all alike that the Lord abides. He narrates that *Mūrka nāyaṇār* was a virtuous gambler who would welcome the devotees who came to visit him; he would sit them down to eat with warm affection. Because of the number of devotees who flocked to him, all his inherited wealth was soon exhausted. He was himself reduced to poverty and dejection. Hence, by the practice of gambling, he performed a service to the devotees which was his chief aim. He kept his conscience clear by not handling personally any of the gains which he accrued through gambling. Thus, day by day he lovingly fed the devotees, his guilt was purged by *aruḷ* (grace), and when departed from this world, he attained the eternal abode (PP 3623-3635).

⁸⁰⁹ 'தம்மையே சிந்தியா எனும் தன்மைதான் மெய்ம்மை ஆகிவிளங்கு ஒளிதாம் என இம்மையே நினைவார்தம் இருவினைப் பொய்ம்மைவல் இருள் போக்குவர் என்றதாம்' (பெ.பு. 2733).

⁸¹⁰ 'மாதுக்கம் நீங்கல் உறுவீர் மனம்பற்றும் என்பது ஆதிச்சுடர் சோதியை அன்பின் அகத்துள் ஆக்கிப் போதித்த நோக்கு உற்று ஒழியாமல் பொருந்தி வாழ்ந்து போதித்த பந்தப் பிறப்பின் நெறிபேர்மின் என்றாம்' (பெ.பு. 2749).

⁸¹¹ '...எவ்வுயிருக்கும் தருவானை...' (பெ.பு. 1369).
'... who gives life to all' (PP. 1369).

In order to emphasize the value of the moral path in the treatment of all living beings alike, *Cēkkiḷār* goes on to give the following example of *Cirappuli nāyaṇār* who showed unfailing love towards the growing numbers of devotees, and excelled in acts of self-less kindness. So he abode in the ‘shadow of the feet of God’ (PP 3664)⁸¹². Thus for *Cēkkiḷār* for those who follow the path, the treatment of all alike and as oneself is very important. Therefore, in every narration, *Cēkkiḷār* praises them, as for example, he remarks ‘I offer tribute of praise to the feet of the noble *Cirppuli*, renowned for his virtue’ (PP. 3665)⁸¹³. He even names this virtue as ‘the great path of justice’ (PP. 129)⁸¹⁴. By naming it thus, *Cēkkiḷār* at least indirectly asserts that in his ethical worldview, given that all are alike, treating all alike as oneself is not an optional recommendation for some but an imperative requirement for all devotee of *Śiva*.

In *Cēkkiḷār*’s perspective, such a path is possible because of the *arul* (grace) of *Śiva* acting in human person (PP. 3692)⁸¹⁵. At the same time as *arul* (grace) acts through these people, and as instrumental causes of *arul* (grace), therefore, the *nāyaṇmār* too are praiseworthy and to serve them is a great privilege. It is stated ‘it is the Lord our master who gives us *arul* to meditate on him and to hold fast to the truth with unremitting zeal. He takes delight in meeting his servants, and see, today in his *arul* he has given us a

⁸¹² ‘...ஈசர் தான்நிழல் தங்கினாரே’ (பெ.பு. 3663).

⁸¹³ ஆறத்தினில் மிக்க மேன்மை அந்தணர் ஆக்கர் தன்னில் மறைப்பெரு வள்ளலார் வண் சிறப்புலியார் தாள் வாழ்த்திச் சிறப்பு உடைத்திருச் செங்காட்டங் குடியினில் செம்மை வாய்ந்த விறல் சிறுத்தொண்டர் செய்த திருத்தெழில் விளம்பல் உற்றேன்’ (பெ.பு. 3664).

⁸¹⁴ ‘...தருமம் தன்வழிச் செல்கை கடன் என்று தன் மைந்தன்’ (பெ.பு. 128).

⁸¹⁵ ‘பொருஇல் திருத்தொண்டர்க்குப் புவிமேல்வந்து அருள்புரியும் பெருகு அருளின்திறம் கண்டு பிரான் அருளே பேணுவீர் வரும் அன்பின் வழிநிற்பீர் எனமறை பூண்டு அறைவனபோல்...’ (பெ.பு. 3697).

‘Come and the grace which the Lord has come to earth to bestow upon his peerless servant! Praise him for his grace, and walk in the way of love!’ (PP. 3697).

palanquin inlaid with pearls' (PP. 2116)⁸¹⁶. Later on, in concluding his narrations of the life of *Kūr̥ruva purāṇam* he records 'by his devoted service, he set himself to eradicate all wrongdoing. We have made obeisance at his feet' (PP. 3942)⁸¹⁷. After stating his admiration for the *nāyaṇār*, *Cēkkiḷār* repeatedly underlines the experience of the Lord's *aruḷ* (grace) of the *nāyaṇmār*. He describes the Lord's *aruḷ* (grace) as operating intensely in all human hearts and those devotees are potentially divinely graced, and one must model one's life according to this vision. Moral virtues flow from this inner vision. This vision negates all practical distinctions between humans and stresses the important fact that all beings are born out of *Śiva* and are servants of him.

The *nāyaṇmār*'s awareness of this ontological basis of the prevailing unity of the oneness of all is but natural, for the *nāyaṇmār* to realize that in the suffering of others, they must come to the other's aid. This *Cēkkiḷār* recounts in the life of *Tiruñānacampantar* where he narrates 'while the *nāyaṇār* was staying at *Kaṭimāṭac Ceṇkunrūr*, his companion became fearful ... and they approached *Campantar* and made known to him their fears. In response, he first invoked the grace of God ... when he had brought his hymn to a fitting conclusion, the fever epidemic abated and disappeared, not just in that town itself, but throughout the whole country' (PP. 2231-2239). Yet *Cēkkiḷār* narrates, that some in their hard-heartedness, when they see others suffering, feel no empathy towards them. This can be explained, according to *Cēkkiḷār*, by the fact that their interior knowledge or 'soul-knowledge' as he refers to it, is badly dimmed or

⁸¹⁶ 'எந்தை ஈசன்னை எடுத்து இவ்அருள் வந்தவாறு மற்றுஎவ்வணமோ என்று சிந்தை செய்யும் திருப்பதிகத்து இசை புந்தி ஆரப்புகன்று எதிர்போற்றுவார்' (பெ.பு. 2116).

⁸¹⁷ 'காதல் பெருமைத் தொண்டின்நிலைக் கடல்குழ் வையம் காத்து அளித்துக் கோதுஅங்கு அகல முயல்களந்தைக் கூற்றனார் தம்கழல் வணங்கி...' (பெ.பு. 3942).

blunted; they are ‘like a lamp which is clean and bright on the outside, but full of darkness within’ (PP. 473)⁸¹⁸.

The narration indicates that the human person is born with divine *aruḷ* (grace). The uniqueness of these benefits of *aruḷ* (grace) in the *nāyaṇmār* is implied in an unparalleled superior life, i.e. to experience the absolute natural bliss of the divine ‘who is the embodiment of truth’ (PP. 3644)⁸¹⁹ and whose power of effulgent *aruḷ* (grace) is found within all things animate and inanimate, all living and non-living things, whose existence is sustained, and who live absolutely unobstructed by any impediment of time or place (PP. 3666).⁸²⁰ How can one attain such a state of life? *Cēkkiḷār* asserts that is by the ‘*aruḷ* (grace) of God which is His natural manifestation’ (PP. 286)⁸²¹. *Cēkkiḷār* also makes an earnest appeal that no enquiry should be conducted regarding the *Śiva*’s *aruḷ* (grace) that he bestows on His devotees, His original nature. For they are limitless and if one attempt to explore them with one’s limited epistemological tools, and then one will be miserably limiting them. Again, the scholars should not test the Lord seriously through logical inference, and verbal testimony, since He is of the very form of effulgence (PP. 2737)⁸²². How can one obtain this *aruḷ* (grace)? *Cēkkiḷār* repeatedly insists, in the strongest possible terms, that it is obtainable by compassion and love (PP. 806).⁸²³ He

⁸¹⁸ ‘... மைபொதி விளக்கே என்ன மனத்தினுள் கறுப்பு வைத்துப் பொய்த்துவ வேடம் கொண்டு புகுந்தனன் முத்த நாதன்’ (பெ.பு. 473).

⁸¹⁹ ‘...ஈசர் அருள்கூட ஈறுஇல்சிவ நல்நெறியே பொருள் ஆவது என உணர்வு நாட்டுவார்’ (பெ.பு. 3644).

⁸²⁰ ‘...உலகில் வளர் உயிர்க்கு எல்லாம் உயர்காவல் தொழில் பூண்டு...’ (பெ.பு. 3666).

‘... The Lord who is eternal had taken the noble task of protecting the lives of all the creatures of the world’.

⁸²¹ ‘...அற்புதமோ சிவன் அருளோ அறியேன் என்று அதிசயத்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 286).

⁸²² ‘மன்னும் ஏதுக்களால் எனும் வாய்மைதான் தன்னது ஒப்புவேறு இன்மையில் சங்கரன் இன்ன தன்மையை ஏது எடுத்துக்காட்டு அன்னவற்றால் அளப்பிலன் என்றதாம்’ (பெ.பு. 2737).

⁸²³ ‘அவனுடைய வடிவு எல்லாம் நம் பக்கம் அன்பு என்றும் அவனுடைய அறிவு எல்லாம் நமை அறியும் அறிவு என்றும் அவனுடைய செயல் எல்லாம் நமக்கு இனியவாம் என்றும்

narrates the life of the *nāyaṇmār* implicitly or explicitly referring to the benevolent nature of *Śiva*, the pathetic plight in winning *Śiva's aruḷ* (grace), the overwhelming enjoyment of bliss in seeing *Śiva*. An interesting conclusion may be drawn from this; for *Cēkkiḷār*, a morally good human act is a compassionate act of service. Here a compassionate act is that which results from one's feeling of oneness with all creatures and from one's experiencing the suffering of all others as one's own.

After having established the foundation of the moral path, *Cēkkiḷār* focuses attention on practical moral behaviour that is visible, i.e. norms of behaviour and attitudes which added character development and habit formation, in the life of the *nāyaṇmār*. Four key points can be mentioned in this regard. They are control of the sense organs (*intiriya oḷukkam* : இந்திரிய ஒழுக்கம்), control of the mind (*karaṇa oḷukkam*: காரண ஒழுக்கம்), right conduct of life (*Śiva oḷukkam*: சிவ ஒழுக்கம்), and right conduct of the soul (*āṇma oḷukkam*: ஆன்ம ஒழுக்கம்): this is discernable in the narration titled 'the Taking of Captive' (தடுத்தாட் கொண்டபுராணம்: *Taṭuttāṭkoṇṭa purāṇam*) (PP. 147-349)⁸²⁴. In the section that deals with *Tirukṛippuṭ Tonṭar purāṇam*, the *nāyaṇār* is

அவனுடைய நிலை இவ்வாறு அறிநீ என்று அருள் செய்தார்' (பெ.பு. 806).

'His whole being is filled with love ... his whole mind is set on serving ... all what he does is pleasing.' (PP. 806).

⁸²⁴ In one of the stanza of this section *Cēkkiḷār*:

‘ஐந்துபேர் அறிவும் கண்களே கொள்ள அளப்பு அரும் கரணங்கள் நான்கும் சிந்தையே ஆகக் குணம் ஒரு முன்றும் திருந்து சாத்துவிகமே ஆக இந்துவாழ் சடையான் ஆடும் ஆனந்த எல்லைஇல் தனிப்பொருங் கூத்தின் வந்தபேர் இன்ப வெள்ளத்துள் திளைத்து மாறுஇலா மகிழ்ச்சியில் மலர்ந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 252).

‘The hearts of *nāyaṇmār* constantly overflow with love, with the five senses subsumed in the act of seeing, the four faculties of the mind in meditation, and the three qualities in pure enlightenment’ (PP. 252).

What should be noted in the stanza is that though the intellect is but one, the gateways thereto are five (ஐம்பொறி: *aimpoṇi* i.e. the five organs of senses viz., மெய்: *mei*, வாய்: *vāi*, கண்: *kaṇ*, மூக்கு: *mūkku*, செவி: *cevi*). In this sense, the five organs of senses are described as bringing fivefold knowledge i.e. ஐந்துபேர் அறிவு (*aintu pēr arivu*) viz. சுவை: *cuvai* (taste), ஒளி: *oḷi* (form. light), *ūru* : ஊறு (touch), *ōcai*: ஒசை (sound), *nāṇṇam*: நாற்றம் (smell). It pervasion which is also fivefold was here totally concentrated in the eyes –their vision (ஐந்துபேர் அறிவும் கண்களே கொள்ள: *aintu pēr arivum kaṇkalē koḷḷa*). *Cuntarar nāyaṇār* beheld the Lord-Dancer (வாழ் சடையான் ஆடும் ஆனந்த எல்லைஇல்: *vāḷ caṭaiyāṇ āṭum āṇanta*

described as one who dedicated himself in thought and deed to the feet of the Lord (PP. 1193)⁸²⁵. On another occasion it is written that the *nāyaṇār* dedicated His entire life to *Śiva* (PP. 1347)⁸²⁶. In this way *Cēkkiḷār* tries to portray the *nāyaṇmār* who adhered to a certain sense of discipline in life to reach *Śiva*.

Cēkkiḷār also divides the discipline of the sense organs (*intiriya oḷukkam* : இந்திரிய ஒழுக்கம்) into two, namely, the organs of action (ஐம்பொறி: *aimpori* i.e. the five organs of senses) and the organs of knowledge (ஐந்துபேர் அறிவு: *aintu pēr arivu*). As for the control of the organs of knowledge and purity of mind, *Cēkkiḷār* mentions restraint from uttering harsh words (PP. 4071)⁸²⁷; restraint from treating others with cruelty (PP.

ellaiyil). The *nāyaṇār*'s ears did not hear; his nose did not smell; his lips did not articulate and his skin was bereft of the sense of touch. Likewise his fourfold *karaṇaṅkaḷ nāṇkum*: கரணங்கள் நான்கும் (inner sensory comprising of சித்தம்: *cittam* (mind), மனம்: *manam* (will), புத்தி: *buddhi* (reason) and அகங்காரம்: *akaṅkaram* (self-love) were all சித்தம்: *cittam* (mind) nothing else (கரணங்கள் நான்கும் சிந்தையே ஆகக்: *karanangal nankum sinthaiye aka*). The five great sense rested on the eyes only. Again the differentiated *gunas* of *satwam*, *rajas* and *tamas* became one uniform *satwam* (குணம் ஒரு மூன்றும் திருந்து சாத்துவிகமே ஆக: *kuṇam oru mūṇṇum tiruntu cāttu vikamē āka*). What should be noted is that all other activities ceased; that which was experienced was vision alone. In this divinely unique stillness, the dance of bliss is witnessed. Thus the *nāyaṇmār* enjoyed the great, blissful, and limitless dance. As the *nāyaṇmār* had conquered his passions and held as obligation not to forget the grace of *Śiva*, it is but natural for him to behold and enjoy the resplendent beauty of the Lord in any of His forms. However, the bliss which is everlasting being enjoyed by him transcends the reach of the sense organs and none can sound the depths.

⁸²⁵ 'அவ்வகைய திருநகராம் அதன்கண் ஒரு மருங்கு உறைவார் இவ்உலகில் பிறப்பினால் ஏகாலிக் குலத்து உள்ளார் செவ்விய அன்புடை மனத்தார் சீலத்தின் நெறி நின்றார் மைவிருவு கண்டர் ஆடி வழித்தொண்டர் உளரானார்' (பெ.பு. 1193).

'This man was a washer man by birth. He was of a loving disposition, and steadfast in the path of virtue. By family tradition he was a servant of the Lord with the blue throat. Since his youth he had dedicated himself, in thought, word and deed to the feet of the Lord' (PP.1193).

⁸²⁶ 'மையல் துறை நிகழ்ந்து அலர்சீர் வாகீசர் மனத்தொடு வாய்மையுடன் மெய்யுற்று திருப்பணி செய்பவராய் விரவும் சிவசின்னம் விளங்கிடவே எய்துற்ற தியானம் அறா உணர்வும் ஈறுஇன்றி எழும் திருவாசகமும் கையில் திகழும் உழவாரமுடன் கைக்கொண்டு கலந்து கசிந்தனரே' (பெ.பு. 1347).

'He put on the outward signs of devotion, and of a devoted body, mind and lips to his service. With undivided attention, he recited the scriptures and practiced constant meditation. With his hoe in hand, he lovingly performed his acts of service' (PP. 1347).

⁸²⁷ 'By his kindly words, he gave pleasure to all...'

4094-4099)⁸²⁸, restraint from looking on others with evil intent (PP.31-34)⁸²⁹; and restraint from tasting and smelling sweet aromas offered to the Lord (PP. 4125-4131)⁸³⁰; preventing by any means any harm to living beings (PP. 4051),⁸³¹ visiting places to meet saintly people (PP. 3661-3573)⁸³²; being of help to others (PP. 4018),⁸³³ and performing good deeds (PP. 4124).⁸³⁴ By these restraints, *Cēkkiḷār* notes the *nāyaṇmār* as followers of the moral path led moderate lives avoiding extremes. It is clear that *Cēkkiḷār* recognizes that by and large, our knowledge of the external world is received through the five sense organs and what enters into us through them can defile us in that they can influence our thinking and action for bad or good. Hence it is necessary to restrain our sense organs. Here the author may not strike us as an original or extraordinary master in his insistence on restraint, if one wants to follow a spiritual path. *Cēkkiḷār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* does so, in the context of the *nāyaṇmār*'s own *Śaiva* moral path (PP. 734)⁸³⁵.

⁸²⁸ Here is the example of *Muṇaiyaṭuvār* who liberally distributes all spoils which he won by the conquest of his foe in battle. All the wealth that he earned in this way he would give away in accordance with their stated needs.

⁸²⁹ Here it is narrated that *Cuntarar* looked upon two women of rare beauty and when the Lord saw what happened he caused the rebirth of the *nāyaṇār*.

⁸³⁰ Here it is narrated that *Cerutuṇi nāyaṇār* was a devotee of Lord *Śiva*. One day, the famous queen of the *Pallava* king *Cingar* picked up a flower which had fallen to the ground in the hall of flowers, and smelt it. When the *nāyaṇār* saw this, he seized the queen by her hair, pulled her to the ground and took hold of her nose. "This nose had sniffed a flower which was to grace the head of the Lord!" he cried, and cut off the queen's nose with his sword.

⁸³¹ '...வெய்யகலியும் பகையும் மிகைஒழியும் வகைஅடக்கிச் செய்யசடைவர் சைவத் திருநெறியால் அரகஅளிப்பார் ஐயடிகள் நீதியால் அடிப்படுத்தும் செங்கோலார்' (பெ.பு. 4061).

'... [He] successfully eradicated wars and conflict ... brought all his subjects under the rule of justice...' (PP. 4061).

⁸³² It is said that when any devotee of the Lord came to his door, *Cirapulli nāyaṇār* would make obeisance at their feet, the greeting them with kindly words, gave them a warm welcome. Every day he would provide nourishing food for his visitors and meet all their needs.

⁸³³ '...அடித்தொண்டு பற்றிப் பணிசெய் கலிக்கம்பர் என்பார் மற்று ஓர்பற்று இல்லார்' (பெ.பு. 4018).

'... The focus of all his thoughts was single minded devotion ... and acts of service for the Lord and his servants' (PP. 4018).

⁸³⁴ '...வழித்தொண்டின் வழிப்பாட்டில் எய்துபெரும் சிறப்புடைய இடங்கழியார்' (பெ.பு. 4124).

'... [He] won great fame faithfully following the path of service...' (PP. 4124).

⁸³⁵ 'பலதுறைகளின் வெருவரலொடு பயில்வலை அறுநுழைமா உலமொடு படர்வன தகைஉற உறுசின மொடுகவர்நாய் நிலவிய இருவினைவலியிடை நிலை சுழல்பவர் நெறிசேர் புலன் உறுமனன் இடைதடை செய்த பொறிகளின் அளவு உளவே' (பெ.பு. 734).

As for the discipline of the mind, he lists realization of the divine within oneself and not allowing the mind to be absorbed in mundane things, not being mindful of the evil of others, not being proud, avoiding any artificiality, being natural and restraining all one's faculties from doing evil. Here, in his discipline of the mind from the sense organs, *Cēkṣiṭār* shows the *nāyaṇmār* as the one who followed a moral code, who directed their attention away from evil and focused constantly on this higher reality. *Cēkṣiṭār's* understanding of human psychology is naturally right. If one's mind is filled with many thoughts and interests, it cannot be wholly taken up on what needs total attention and concern. *Cēkṣiṭār* elaborates on the point in that the followers of the moral path must be solely concerned with this path without any sort of mental dissipation (PP. 3668)⁸³⁶. The necessity of discipline of the mind is again asserted in stanza in the narration of *Pūcalār nāyaṇār* (PP. 4178)⁸³⁷.

The other moral idea that *Cēkṣiṭār* highlights is that which relates to a right conduct of life (*Śiva oḷukkam*: சிவ ஒழுக்கம்). Through the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* many examples are cited by *Cēkṣiṭār*. In the explanation of what he really means by right

When narrating the life of *Kaṇṇappar*, *Cēkṣiṭār* beautifully notes 'Just as, when the soul lies trapped in the net of good and evil deeds, although it has the wisdom to find the way out, the senses block its path, so did the hounds blocks the animals' escape' (PP. 734).

⁸³⁶ 'உள்ளநிறை கலைத்துறைகள் ஒழிவுஇன்றிப் பயின்று அவற்றால் தெள்ளி வடித்து அறிந்த பொருள் சிவன் கழலில் செறிவு என்றே கொள்ளும் உணர்வினில் முன்னே கூற்று உதைத்த கழற்கு அன்பு பள்ளமடையாய் என்றும் பயின்று வரும் பண்புஉடையார்' (பெ.பு. 3668).

'It is stated in the *Cirutoṇṭa nāyaṇār purāṇam* 'through his assiduous studies, he had reached the conclusion that attachment to the feet of *Śiva* was the essence of all knowledge. Just as water will forever flow downhill, so his life was characterised by constant love for those sacred feet' (PP. 3668).

⁸³⁷ 'அருமறை மரபுவாழ அப்பதி வந்து சிந்தை தரும்உணர்வு ஆனஎல்லாம் தம்பிரான் கழல்மேல் சார வருநெறி மாறா அன்பு வளர்ந்துஎழ வளர்த்துவாமைப் பொருள்பேறு வேதந்திக் கலைஉணர் பொலிவின் மிக்கார்' (பெ.பு. 4178).

That 'for the advancement of the Vedic tradition, a man was born in that town whose thought and feelings were all focussed on the feet of the Lord. He never deviated from the path of devotion, and as he grew, his love grew with him. He was exceptionally knowledgeable in the science of Vedic morality by which the truth is attained' (PP. 4178).

conduct of life, *Cēkḱilār* explains that one should treat all alike and as one treats oneself without any distinctions of gender, caste or status in society. Although such a list may seem anachronistic, given the social situation at the time of *Cēkḱilār*, it should be mentioned that his earnest desire was to rid society of any and every type of discrimination. Though this message is clearly embodied in the life of *Kaṇṇappa nāyaṇār*, it is also stated, in the *Iyarpakai nāyaṇār purāṇam* (PP. 406)⁸³⁸.

Another significant moral ideal that is emphasised in the *Periya Purāṇam* is the right conduct of the soul (*āṇma oḷukkam*: ஆன்ம ஒழுக்கம்). This is related to the preceding, but is wider in scope in that it included all ‘living beings’. To make it clear that it means all ‘sentient beings’, from the smallest to the greatest, he adds, ‘from spider to an elephant’ (PP 4202-4218)⁸³⁹. He does not simply lay down a norm, but gives the reason or the motivation why one should treat all living beings alike and as oneself. Since it is one and the same Lord *Śiva* who resides in all living creatures, and by following the moral path, one progresses towards identifying oneself with the Lord *Śiva*; it is

⁸³⁸ ‘ஆறுகுடிய ஐயர்மெய் அடிமை அளவு இலாதது ஓர் உளம்நிறை அருளால் நீறுசேர் திருமேனியர் மனத்து நினைத்த யாவையும் வினைப்பட முடித்து மாறுஇலாதநல் நெறியினில் விளங்கும் மனை அறம்புரி மகிழ்ச்சியின்வந்த பேறுஎலாம் அவர் ஏவினைசெய்யும் பெருமையை எனப் பேணிவாழ் நாளில்’ (பெ.பு. 406).

It is stated that ‘he was a true devotee of the Lord. Grace filled his heart to overflowing. If anyone approaches him, he would carry out their wish to the letter. He counted it an honour to fulfil the wishes of others, and delighted in the constant practise of domestic virtue’ (PP. 406).

⁸³⁹ While narrating the life of *Kōccenkaṭ Cēkḱilār* notes that there was a white elephant of great austerity that used to bathe the Lord with fragrant water carried in its trunk and worshipped with the bunch of flowers every day. At the same spot there was a spider worshipping the God of gods. It used to build sturdy web of fine thread as a canopy over the Lord’s golden head, to protect him from the rays of the sun and falling leaves. Both the creatures were doing in their love for the Graceful one, the service and worship they can offer. One day when the elephant came to worship the feet of the Lord, it swept away the spider’s careful work as unseemly. Thinking the elephant was just casually waving its trunk, the spider spun its web again. However, on the following day the mighty elephant destroyed the web once more. At this spider was indignant. So in anger, it crept in the elephant’s trunk and gave it a bite. Unable to bear the pain, the elephant neat its trunk upon the ground, and then fell down and died. By the impact of the trunk upon the ground, the spider too was killed. In his arul, the Lord duly granted to the elephant a fitting boon, and at the same time ordained that the spider should be born into the family of the *Cōla* kings to rule the world.

imperative that one identifies oneself with all living creatures and treat them all as oneself. This feeling of oneness or union with all living beings implies not repaying evil with evil but bearing all with patience – as long as this does not in itself bring harm to anyone. *Cēkkiḷār* surely wants to show that the *nāyaṇmār* lived a life of virtue which led to the highest standard of morality in that he proposed that one's norm of behaviour should be the abstention of doing harm to any living creature even at the cost of suffering evil from others. Certainly one cannot deny that this is a higher form of human morality.

It also should be noted, here, these deeds good and bad or righteous and unrighteous of the *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* may be further classified into those deeds done towards *Śiva* and others. In the *Periya Purāṇam Cēkkiḷār* highlights the righteous deed done towards *Śiva* includes doing charitable deeds to *Śiva* temples. This is evident in the narration of those who attend the person of the Lord three times a day (PP. 4165- 4167) where *Cēkkiḷār* notes that they offer worship three times a day and the glory of these men is beyond telling (PP. 4166)⁸⁴⁰. At the same time *Cēkkiḷār* also points to the righteous deeds which can enable one to attain the nature of *Śiva* – adoring a devotee of *Śiva* and listening and singing in praise of *Śiva* (PP. 4152)⁸⁴¹. It is also clear *Cēkkiḷār* makes it a point to highlight the unrighteous deeds done towards *Śiva* i.e. illegitimately plundering the properties of *Śiva* and His devotees and indulging in prohibited activities

⁸⁴⁰ ‘...முப்போதும் ... அர்ச்சனைகள் சிவவேதியர்க்கே ... அப் பெருந்தகையார் குலப்பெருமையாம் புகழும் பெற்றியதோ’ (பெ.பு. 4166).
⁸⁴¹ ‘ஈசனுக்கே அன்பானார் யாவரையும் தாம்கண்டால் கூசி மிகக் குதுகுதுத்துக் கொண்டாடி மனம் மகிழ்வுற்று ஆசையினால் ஆவின்பின்கன்று அணைந்தோர்போல் அணைந்து பேசுவன பணிந்த மொழி இனியனவே பேசுவார்’ (பெ.பு. 4152).

‘At the sight of any devotee of God, they become shy, but at the same time full of joy and delight. They will follow such devotees with fervant longing, as a calf follows its mother, and speak to them with courtesy and respect’ (PP. 4152).

towards these three (PP. 4139)⁸⁴². The righteous deed done towards others include doing good to living beings and unrighteous deeds include doing evil to other living creatures i.e. doing injustice to wife, children and relatives. The unrighteous deeds possess abnoxious characters like lust. *Kāraikkāl Ammai* struggle to overcome unfaithfulness of her husband in the *Periya Purāṇam* is a clear example of such unrighteous deed done towards others (PP. 1722-1787). According to the *Periya Purāṇam*, when the *nāyaṇmār* is appealed to for help by those who are sunk in misery, they would willingly rush to their rescue. To the illiterates and to others who are poor in spirit, but who aspire for true wisdom, they offer soothing words and the effective means of attaining it. Both the material and spiritual benefits are conferred by the *nāyaṇmār* on their fellow-beings. When his followers were suffering due to severe fever at *Ceṅkunrūr*, *Campantar* sang a song which refers to the blue throat of *Śiva* which saved the devotees from all defilements (PP. 2231-2239). This is an example of help at the empirical level from religious perspectives. *Campantar* and *Tirunāvukkaracar* were granted two gold coins by the *aruḷ* (grace) of *Śiva* during the famine (PP. 2465-2475). The *nāyaṇmār* show no ill-will to even lower creatures. Instead, they rescue them from danger as was done by *Maṇunīti Cōḷa* who sacrificed his only son with a view of deepening justice to a cow (PP. 86-146). *Campantar* rescued the dead person due to snake bite to make a maid happy

⁸⁴² For example there is the story of *Kōṭpuli nāyaṇār* who used all the generous prize money he received from the king to build up stocks of paddy in all the temples of the Lord *Śiva*, until their store-rooms were bursting at the seams. One day he was ordered by the king to take the field against his enemies. By this time he had built sufficient reserves of paddy for the Lord to last until his return. So before setting out, he approached all his relatives and gave them warning that the paddy gathered is for the Lord and if anyone even thinks of misappropriating them would be severely punished. A short while after *Kōṭpuli* left a famine arose in that country. His hard-pressed relatives plundered what the *nāyaṇār* has gathered for the Lord. Saddened by what had happened, the *nāyaṇār* decided to punish the relatives who stole what was due to the Lord and His devotees.

(PP. 2375-2400). The kinds of righteous deeds or services throw light upon the bent of mind and spirit of the *nāyaṇmār* had towards *Śiva* and fellow beings.

8.4 The End Goal of Moral Ideals in the *Periya Purāṇam*

The ecstatic life of the *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* from the initial step is mystical and the journey terminates in the fruition of comprehending the vision of *Śiva*, His beauty, truth and goodness (PP. 23, 130, 165, 223, 555)⁸⁴³. These verses in the *Periya Purāṇam* suggests that when one lives in accordance with moral values, one gets transformed into a higher life where one is at the service of the Lord and is in union with the Lord. Therefore, as it is written in the *Periya Purāṇam*, the final fulfilment or the goal of the *nāyaṇmār*'s moral aspiration was to be at service at the feet of the Lord in His abode (PP. 489)⁸⁴⁴. Hence *Cēkkiḷār* is not speaking of the mere intellectual experience of being at the service of the Lord but in the actuality or existential experience of a

⁸⁴³ *Cēkkiḷār* notes that:

‘On the mountain’s lower slopes there dwelt a famous hermit of deep devotion named *Upamanyu*. Although the true nature of the Lord *Śiva* is beyond the normal power of human comprehension, He had achieved that realization’ (PP. 23).

‘அன்னதன்திருத் தாழ்வரை யின்இடத்து இன்னதன்மையன் என்று அறியாச் சிவன் தன்னையே உணர்ந்து ஆர்வம் தழைக்கின்றான் உன்ன அருஞ்சீர் உபமன் னியமுனி’ (பெ.பு. 23).

In another instance *Cēkkiḷār* notes that:

‘The Lord of all virtue ... bestows his grace on countless devotees, who like *King Maṇu* follow the path of virtue’ (PP. 135).

‘இணையவகை அறநெறியில் எண் இறந்தோர்க்கு அருள்புரிந்து முணையவர் அவர் மகிழ்ந்தருளப் ... புகலல் ஆம் தகைமையதோ அணையதனுக்கு அகமலர் ஆம் அறவனார்...’ (பெ.பு. 135).

These *nāyaṇmār* fixed their mind on the feet of the Lord (‘... நாதன் தன்னடி மனத்துள் கொண்டு...’) (PP. 165) and without more ado attained the abode of *Śiva* (‘... உயர் சிவலோகமும் எளிது ஆம்வகை பெற்றாள்’) (PP. 223). In the hearts of such loving devotees, the Lord abides forever (‘...துனனிய அன்பின் மிக்க தொண்டர் தம் சிந்தை நீங்கா அந்நிலை அரனார் வாழ்வது...’) (PP. 555). Further, *Cēkkiḷār* also notes that the Lord blessed the *nāyaṇmār* to continue their service in His abode:

‘...in the radiant mountain of the Lord, where he was appointed to succeed to the leadership of *Śiva*’s heavenly hosts’ (‘...சுடர்நெடும் கயிலைமால் வரையதி மாநநல் பெருங்கணங்கட்கு நாதர்ஆம் வழித்தொண்டின் நிலைபெற்றார்’ (பெ.பு. 3933).

⁸⁴⁴ *Cēkkiḷār* states: ‘then the Lord *Śiva* ... stood before the king his servant, and granted him a vision of himself, as he had done before. He also gave him grace to worship without ceasing, so that his servant might find refuge at his feet, to which no dwellers of heaven could even attain’ (PP. 489).

‘தொண்டனார்க்கு இமயப் பாவை துணைவனார் அவர்முன் தம்மைக் கண்டவாறு எதிரே நின்று காட்சி தந்தருளி மிக்க அண்ட வானவர்கட்கு எட்டர் அருட்கழல் நீழல் சேரக் கொண்டு அவர் இடையறாமல் கும்பிடும் கொள்கை ஈந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 489).

‘deathless supreme life’, and ‘knowing the state of *Śiva* and becoming one with him’ and in submission of all faculties, at the service of the Lord as the sole end of the moral path (PP. 1225)⁸⁴⁵. Most of the *nāyaṇmār* entered into a union only after they had successfully fulfilled their mission of serving the Lord and His devotee, conceiving it has the very purpose of their birth (PP. 878)⁸⁴⁶. As a first step in their life of devotion and service, the *nāyaṇmār* adhered to the sublime consciousness of *Śiva* mostly and then enjoyed mystic contemplation which is active in nature. *Tirunāvukkaracar*, for instance, became an ardent follower of *Śaivism* through the sacred symbol of that tradition. He then gradually became the very form of devotion and service and finally illumined himself as a very form of wisdom and united himself with *Śiva*.

This attitude of the *nāyaṇmār* and the way of realization of *Śiva* is discussed beautifully in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 72)⁸⁴⁷. This verse equates the growth of paddy-grains to the devoted hearts of *nāyaṇmār*. The points of comparison are: (i) like the growing grains, the devotees grow from strength to strength in loftiness and stateliness (ii) the ears of corn are gravid with pure white pulp. The *nāyaṇmār* too are full of the

⁸⁴⁵ *Cēkkiḷār* narrates: ‘*Vicāra Carumaṇ* was astonished to see the level of knowledge he had attained in the scripture and in the arts before ever they had instructed him. Yet the noble little fellow had achieved the realization that the feet of the dancing Lord are more precious than any conceivable object of study. The truth had dawned upon him that we belong to the dancing Lord. From that insight there welled up in him an unceasing flow of love. From this in turn issued a sense of duty which prompted him to strenuous effort. This became the settled pattern of his life’ (PP. 1225).

⁸⁴⁶ ‘...சடைமுடியார்க்கு ஆள் ஆகும் பதம்பெற்ற தணிவு இல்பெரும் பேறுஉடையார் தம் பெருமான் கழல்சார்ந்த துணிவு உடைய தொண்டர்க்கே ஏவல் செய்யும் தொழில் பூண்டார்’ (பெ.பு. 878). ‘...He had attained knowledge of *Śiva*, and he had become a servant of the Lord...He made it his life’s work to fulfil the wishes of all those who like him had become servants of the great Lord’s feet’ (PP. 878).

⁸⁴⁷ ‘பத்தியின் பாலர் ஆகிப் பரமனுக்கு ஆளாம் அன்பர் தத்தமில் கூடினார்கள் தலையினால் வணங்குமா போல் மொய்த்தநீள் பத்தியினபால் முதிர்தலை வணங்கி மற்றை வித்தகர் தன்மை போல் விளைந்த காலி எல்லாம்’ (பெ.பு. 72).

‘Just as in loving devotion the friends and servants of the Lord gather together and bow their heads in worship so the ripening paddy mimics the enlightened souls, standing with heads bowed in serried ranks’ (PP. 72).

milk of true wisdom (iii) as the grains grow they suffer a change of hue. A similar change of hue comes over the *nāyaṇmār* too, as they mature in devotion (iv) whatever lay coiled within the husk, uncoils after a time. Even so, the once-kinky twists in the minds of the devotees get uncoiled in due time (v) when the grains are fully ripe, they dazzle with luster. The mellowed *nāyaṇmār* too shine with a godly lustre. As narrated in the *nāyaṇmār*, *Campantar* became *Tiruñāṇ Campantar* immediately after he had taken the divine milk given to him to enrich his mystical power and enabled him to enjoy the bliss of *Śiva* thoroughly (PP. 1904-3159). In his life one see the valiant and jubilant efforts to establish *Śaivite* tradition through the exaltation of his intuitive power mixed with *Śiva*'s *aruḷ* (grace) and hence becomes a 'new person' or 'person of *Śiva*'. The eventful life of *Campantar* indicates that the unitive life of the *nāyaṇār* is full of mystic achievements which are beneficial both to the *nāyaṇār* and the community. His mystic journey is not only to *Śiva* but in *Śiva*. On the wedding day of his life, the young *nāyaṇār* entered into the effulgence of light which appeared there to unite him with *Śiva* (PP. 3148-3156)⁸⁴⁸.

To affirm this further *Cēkkiḷār* records that the *nāyaṇmār* entreated *Śiva* to teach with the art of deathlessness or endless service; then *Cēkkiḷār* repeatedly confirms that the *nāyaṇmār* received these gifts from *Śiva* (PP. 2064)⁸⁴⁹. Proceeding further, *Cēkkiḷār*,

⁸⁴⁸ In this section it is narrated that the Lord appeared before the *nāyaṇār* and his wedding guest as a pillar of light. Together they worshipped the Lord and entering the light became one with Him.

‘...யாவரும் எம்பால் சோதி இதன் உள்வந்து எய்தும் என்று முவுலகு ஒளியால் விம்ம முழுச்சுடர்த் தானு ஆகி...நாதன் வளர் எழில் சோதி நண்ணி அதன் உள்புகுவார் போதநிலை முடித்தவழிப் புக்கு ஒன்றிடன் ஆனார்’ (பெ.பு. 3156).

⁸⁴⁹ *Cēkkiḷār* states that *Tiruñāṇacampantar* praised the Lord thus ‘you have bestowed upon me the inward experience of bliss, endless and divine’, he further asserted, ‘it has come in visible form, easy to apprehend with the senses’ (PP 2064).

‘உணர்வின்நேர் பெறவரும் சிவபோகத்தை ஒழிவுஇன்றி உருவில்கண் அணையும் ஐம்பொறி அளவினும் எளிவர அருளினை எனப் போற்றி இணைஇல் வண்பெருங் கருணையே ஏத்திமுன் எடுத்த சொல் பதிகத்தில் புணரும் இன்னிசை பாடினார் ஆடினர் பொழிந்தனர் விழிமாரி’ (பெ.பு. 2064).

in innumerable places confirms that this deathless state of life is a grace, a gift or special favour of *Śiva* that was granted to the *nāyaṇār* for leading a virtuous life (PP. 402)⁸⁵⁰. Thus, the *nāyaṇār* paid homage to Lord *Śiva* for revealing his actual state of life and the state of deathless life, led him in the moral path, and thereby granted him that sublime state (PP. 1636-1638)⁸⁵¹. For example, *Cuntarar*, who is known for his God-centred deeds with a comrad's approach, was initially shown by *Śiva* through the settlement of a quarrel in a temple's precincts on the occasion of his wedding. When his life as a *yōgic* saint on earth was over, a white elephant was sent to bring him back to *Kailas*. There he enjoyed the blazing *aruḷ* (grace) of *Śiva*. He was also accompanied by two of his fellow devotees. The attainment of perfection and union with the life of service in the abode of *Śiva* reveal that the worship of God and love of the devotees equally yield the results. The experience as such remains a divine gift. So too, even though *Cēkkiḷār* explains the deathless state of a utmost life of service as the goal of the *nāyaṇmār's* morality, the final benefit is not the natural outcome of it but a gift, which is always gratuitous.

In granting the *nāyaṇmār* the sublime state, the Lord also granted them the power to perform numerous acts of service to the Lord. On several occasions *Cēkkiḷār* narrates that the *nāyaṇmār* had the power to perform miracles but they performed none for their own advantage or for fame. For one who is in communion with the Lord such things are

⁸⁵⁰ 'விறல்உடைத் தொண்டனாரும் வெண்ணகைச் செவ்வாய் மென்தோள் அறல் இயல் கூந்தலாள் ஆம் மனைவியும் அருளின் ஆர்த்த திறல் உடைச் செய்கை செய்து சிவலோகம் அதனை எய்திப் பெறல்அரும் இளமை பெற்றுப் பேரின்பம் உற்றார் அன்றே' (பெ.பு. 402).

'Thus by the grace of God, the servant of the Lord and his beautiful wife performed a brave deed. That very day they received the gift of youth, attained *Śiva's* heaven and entered eternal bliss' (PP. 402).

⁸⁵¹ Thus narrates *Cēkkiḷār*, the *nāyaṇār* at once refused: 'unless I see the abode of the sovereign Lord upon mount *Kailāsa* ... I shall not take this mortal body home ... when the Lord realized how determined he was, he decided to reveal himself to his devotees ... at that the *nāyaṇār's* body was healed and he rose in radiant light: "great one, sweet as nectar, you have made me your own"' (PP 1636-1638).

possible (PP. 3569-3596)⁸⁵². By experiencing and expressing this mystical union with *Śiva* the *nāyaṇmār* felt that they shared everything of *Śiva*. After showing clearly that the *nāyaṇmār* did receive the gift on a number of occasions, *Cēkkiḷār* states that while all of humankind thinks and worries on death, the *nāyaṇmār* were freed from this fear and worry (PP. 1318).⁸⁵³ *Cēkkiḷār* thus wonders whether there is anyone like them and declares there is the noble path (PP. 4166).⁸⁵⁴

It is clear; therefore, for *Cēkkiḷār* life on earth is precious in that only during one's earthly existence can one attain *Śiva* - final fulfilment (PP. 939)⁸⁵⁵. *Cēkkiḷār* believes that with attainment of *Śiva*, one's earthly body is transformed (PP. 1697)⁸⁵⁶. One should observe how *Cēkkiḷār* makes all his assertions on the basis of the *nāyaṇmār*'s mystical experience and how he always attributes all they have received to *Śiva*'s *aruḷ* (grace). In this way, and in affirming in every conclusion that the Lord 'took possession' (தடுத்தாட்கொள்ளல்': *Taṭuttāṭkolal*) of the *nāyaṇmār* and blessed them with His *aruḷ* (grace) race of serving Him eternally, *Cēkkiḷār* invites the Tamil community to come and

⁸⁵² In this narration of the life of *Tirumūlar Cēkkiḷār* remarks that in order to guide the animals who were alive at the death of their master, the *nāyaṇār* assumed the mortal frame of a cowherd (*mūlan*) and guarded them. *Śiva* took possession of the *nāyaṇār* and granted him his deathless life and thereby he became one with *Śiva*.

⁸⁵³ 'மன்னுதபோ தனியார்க்குக் கனவின்கண் மழவிடையார் உன்னுடைய மனக்கவலை ஒழிநீ உன் உடன் பிறந்தான் முன்னமே முனியாகி எனை அடையத் தவம் முயன்றான் அன்னவனை இனிச்சூலை மடுத்து ஆள்வம் என அருளி' (பெ.பு. 1318).

'... "Do not worry", he said, "in a previous birth your brother was a hermit ... I shall now make him my own by afflicting him with a dire illness in his stomach"' (PP. 1318).

⁸⁵⁴ '...அப்பெருந்தகையார் குலப்பெருமையாம் புகழும் பெற்றியதோ' (பெ.பு. 4166).

'... now to the best of my knowledge I shall recount the deeds of the holy servant ... there is the noble path'.

'ஆயர்குலத்தை விளக்கிட வந்து உதயம் செய்தார் தூயசுடர்த்திரு ந்நூவிரும்பு தொழும்பு உள்ளார் வாயினின் மெய்யின் வழுத்தும் மனத்தின் வினைப்பாலின் பேயுடன் ஆடுபிரான் அடி அல்லது பேணாதார்' (பெ.பு. 939).

'He came into the world to bring glory to his caste, by the willing service which he rendered to all who wore the pure white ash. To the Lord *Śiva* alone he offered the worship of his heart and voice' (PP. 939).

⁸⁵⁶ *Cēkkiḷār*'s points out that '*Tirunāvukkaracar* was transformed into the likeness of *Śiva*'s joy and wisdom, the ultimate attainment, and he reposed beneath the feet of the great God' (PP.1697)

'...நண்அரிய சிவானந்த ஞானவடிவே ஆகி அண்ணலார் சேவடிக்கீழ் ஆண்ட அரசு அமர்ந்திருந்தார்' (பெ.பு. 1697).

follow the path of justice and morality, so that they can enter into communion with, and indeed ‘become one, with *Śiva* and enjoy the deathless state of serving Him at His feet’ (PP. 869)⁸⁵⁷.

Cēkṣiḷār explicitly affirms the immortality of the body, an ‘embodied immortality’ and calls it to account for the various elements involved in such a notion. First of all, he is conscious of the truth that the human physical body is subjected to the laws of nature, such as suffering, sickness, ageing and finally death; *Cēkṣiḷār* first records that *Śiva* removed from the *nāyaṇmār* all these sufferings of the body. In another instance it is stated ‘the Lord was so pleased, “my friend”, he said, addressing the devotee who had lived such a good life of conduct and service. “For the service you have offered to my friends, come with your wife to my world above. There you may enjoy eternal bliss...”’ (PP.465).⁸⁵⁸ *Cēkṣiḷār*’s uses a variety of terms to refer to the ‘deathless transformed body’. He calls it ‘grace in human form’ (PP. 1411)⁸⁵⁹, ‘disembodied wraith’ (PP. 1770)⁸⁶⁰, in that the body is in the ‘form of a virtuous ascetic, with matted locks and sacred thread of shining white’ (PP. 1077)⁸⁶¹ ‘encompassed by radiant light’ (PP.1265)⁸⁶².

⁸⁵⁷ ‘... உண்மையால் தமக்கு நேர்ந்த திருப்பணி பலவும் செய்து சிவபாத நிழலில் சேர்ந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 869).

⁸⁵⁸ ‘அன்பனே அன்பர் பூசை அளித்து நீ அணங்கினோடும் என்பெரும் உலகம் எய்தி இருநிதிக்கிழவன் தானே முன்பொரு நிதியம் ஏந்தி மொழிவழி ஏவல்கேட்ப இன்பம் ஆர்ந்து இருக்க என்றே அருள் செய்தான் யாவர்க்கும் மிக்கான்’ (பெ.பு. 465).

⁸⁵⁹ ‘...கருணை கண்டால் மிண்டுஅய செய்கை...’ (பெ.பு. 1411).

⁸⁶⁰ ‘...பேய்வடிவு அடியேனுக்குப் பாங்குற வேண்டும் என்று பரமர் தான் பரவி நின்றார்’ (பெ.பு. 1770).

⁸⁶¹ ‘...புண்ணியமா முனிவடிவாய் மெய் திகழ் வெண் நூல் விளங்க வேணி முடி கொண்டு எழுந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 1077).

⁸⁶² This is more clearly stated when *Cēkṣiḷār* comments: ‘when the boy felt touched by the flower hand of the Lord, though remaining in this mortal body, he became one with *Śiva* in a union that defies all comprehension’ (PP. 1265).

‘செங்கன் விடையார் திருமலர்க்கை தீண்டப் பெற்ற சிறுவனார் அங்கண் மாலை யாக்கையின் மேல் அளவு இன்று உயர்ந்த சிவ மயமாய்ப் பொங்கி எழுந்த திருவருளின் முழுகிப் பூமேல் அயன்

Cēkkiḷār asserts too the transformation of the body : He explains the state of being in the ‘eternal body’ as the ‘privilege of being with him forever in love’ (PP. 648)⁸⁶³, ‘peerless’ (PP. 829)⁸⁶⁴, a ‘state of performing the acts of service with ever-increasing love and longing’ (PP.864)⁸⁶⁵ in the ‘world of the Lord’ (PP. 928)⁸⁶⁶. The Lord invited *Āṇāya nāyaṇār* ‘come just as he is, and live with him’ (PP. 970)⁸⁶⁷. However, *Cēkkiḷār* believes that before the material body is transformed, the person must be ‘freed from all fetters and cleansed of all past evil and action by virtue and conduct’ (PP. 1316-1318)⁸⁶⁸. Once the person is thus prepared, the very material body is transformed into a body of shining light of joy and wisdom (PP. 1697)⁸⁶⁹.

Cēkkiḷār states that the transformed body cannot be destroyed by any natural elements or any human instrument of death (PP. 924-925).⁸⁷⁰ He elaborates on this point in the *Periya Purāṇam* and gives an account of those elements of destruction by which

முதலாம் துங்க அமரர் துதி செய்யச் சூழ்ந்த ஒறியில் தோன்றினார்’ (பெ.பு. 1269).

He became ‘son of Śiva while remaining in his mortal body’ (PP. 1269) and he further elaborates – ‘all that devotees do in love for the Lord is counted as virtuous’ (PP. 1269).

‘துணித்த மறைச் சிறுவர் அந்த உடம்பு தன்னுடனே அரனார் மகனார் ஆயினார் இந்த நிலைமை அறிந்தார் ஆர் ஈறு இலாதார் தமக்கு அன்பு தந்த அடியார் செய்தனவே தவம் ஆம் அன்றோ சாற்றுங்கால்’ (பெ.பு. 1269).

⁸⁶³ ‘மற்று இன்னாம் போற்றுவது என் வானோர் பிரான் அருளைப் பற்றவர் தம் கைவாளால் பாசம் அறுத்தருளிப் உற்றவரை என்றும் உடன்பிரியா அன்பு அருளிப் பொன் தொடியாள் பாகனார் பொன்னம்பலம் அணைந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 648).

⁸⁶⁴ ‘...உம்பர் மேலார்’ (பெ.பு. 829).

⁸⁶⁵ ‘...அன்பு மேல்மேல் மிக்கு எழும் வேட்கைகூர ஒருப்படும் உள்ளத் தன்மை உண்மையால்’ (பெ.பு. 869).

⁸⁶⁶ ‘... என்றும் நம் உலகில் வாழ்வாய் என்று அவர் உடனே நன்ன’ (பெ.பு. 928).

⁸⁶⁷ ‘...இந்நின்ற நிலையே றம்பால் அணைவாய் என அவரும் அந்நின்ற நிலை பெயர்ப்பார்...’ (பெ.பு. 970).

⁸⁶⁸ In this section *Cēkkiḷār* narrates that the *nāyaṇār* sister prayed repeatedly “as a result of past misdeeds, my brother has fallen into the trap of false religion,” she said, “if you are indeed my Lord, rescue him and make him your own. Now as a fruitless penance he wears a mat around his waist, he has shaved his head and eats his food standing up. That is the depth to which he has fallen. By your grace, life him up and hold him lest he fall again.” The Lord who cancels the fruit of deeds from previous births heard her prayer.

⁸⁶⁹ ‘...நண்அரிய சிவானந்த ஞானவடிவே ஆகி அண்ணலார் சேவடிக்கீழ் ஆண்ட அரசு அமர்ந்திருந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 1697).

⁸⁷⁰ ‘Moved by disappointment and grief that the Lord had not eaten his food, he attempted to cut off his head ...at that moment the Lord reached out to check the hand of his devotee’ (PP. 924-925).

the transformed body cannot be destroyed (PP. 1082).⁸⁷¹ One cannot help contemplating that when *Cēkkiḷār* speaks of the transformed body of a person who has attained the deathless supreme life as one who possesses extra-ordinary powers (PP 2799-2804), ‘free of all kinds of suffering’ (PP. 1081)⁸⁷², and is ‘enjoying *Śiva*’s joy and wisdom’ (PP. 1697)⁸⁷³. He does refer to a transformed material body – as material that cannot but remain subject to the laws of nature and death. It seems evident that for *Cēkkiḷār*, a transformed body is no longer a simple material body changed into something non-material but, as we saw, the *nāyaṇmār* received the ‘body of wisdom’ [(‘சிவானந்த ஞானவடிவே: *Śiva āṇanta ṇāṇa vaṭivē* (PP. 1697)], ‘body of love’ [(‘அன்பு பிழம்பு ஆய்த்திரிவார்’: *‘aṇpu piḷam pāyt tirivār’* (PP. 803)]. And the ‘body of humility’ (‘பணிவுடைய வடிவுடையார்: *paṇivuṭaiya vaṭivuṭaiyār*’ (PP. 878). The *Periya Purāṇam* also records that *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṭṭār* too received an embodied immortality [(‘வானமும் மண்ணும் எல்லாம் வணங்கும் பேய் வடிவம் ஆனார்: *vāṇamum maṇṇum ellām vaṇaṅkum pēy vaṭivam āṇār*) (PP. 1771)]. *Cēkkiḷār*’s concept of ‘embodied immortality’ not only transcends death but it also fully validates the importance of the body. What is significant in all of the narrations as *Cēkkiḷār* states ‘it is to the Lord we belong. We are his servants, and we shall not walk in the path of evil deeds’ but in living virtuous lives (PP. 971)⁸⁷⁴.

⁸⁷¹ ‘மாகுடம்பு விடத்தீயின் மஞ்சனம் செய்தருளி எழுந்து ஆகில் மறை முனியாகி அம்பலவர் தான் அடைந்தார்...’ (பெ.பு. 1082).

‘Thus, bathing in the fire, *Nantaṇār* gained release from his tainted body and assumed the form of spotless ascetic ...’ (PP. 1082).

⁸⁷² ‘...திருத்தொண்டர் தம்மைவினை மாக அறுத்துச் சுந்தரத் தாமரைபுரையும் துணை அடிகள் தொழுதிருக்க அந்தம் இலா ஆனந்தப் பெருங்குத்தர் அருள் புரிந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 1081).

‘...The dancing Lord freed his servants gathered there from the taint of deeds, and gave them *aruḷ* to adore his feet, fair as the lotus flower’ (PP. 1081).

⁸⁷³ ‘...நண்அரிய சிவானந்த ஞானவடிவே ஆகி அண்ணலார் சேவடிக்கீழ் ஆண்ட அரசு அமர்ந்திருந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 1697).

⁸⁷⁴ ‘... தூதுகொள் பவராம் நம்மைத் தொழுப்பு கொண்டு உரிமை கொள்வார்’ (பெ.பு. 972).

8.5 Summary

In the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkkiḷār* has surveyed the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* in their quest to attain the direct vision of *Śiva*, the unity of existence consummating in joy and bliss. In the dedicated *nāyaṇmār*, therefore, there is the active attraction towards this *Śiva*. This dynamism is at work in the several acts of illimitable love, on the intuitive awareness and unitive experience of the oneness of life in *Śivam*, for *Śivam*, with *Śivam* and in their affirmation of *Śiva* as the goal of life. This awareness of the *nāyaṇmār* mediate self-knowledge and universal good by explicating the metaphysical, moral and mystical aspects of *Śaiva* way of life in a comprehensive and active way. They upheld *Śaiva-nēti* (சைவநீதி) as the norm of morality and source of moral freedom. It is for this reason *Cēkkiḷār* portrays a variety of meaningful incidents of saintly conduct of the *nāyaṇmār*. He has dealt with moral questions in the context of a typical *Śaivite's* motive and vocation.

It is clear then, that the lives of the *nāyaṇmār*, as narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam* indicate, they had demonstrated by their lives, with their background and condition, what was for them the way of life. They were not guided to see what was in the list of things always right and things always wrong. The *nāyaṇmār* did not lay down a code of laws, and neither did *Cēkkiḷār* of the *Periya Purāṇam* attempt to codify the rules of conduct. In the *Periya Purāṇam*, therefore, there are many instances to prove that motives rather than rules, love's implication rather than law prevailed to judge the *Śaiva* morality. The pathway to *Śiva* in the *Periya Purāṇam*, therefore, proclaims the truth of how a whole band of *Śiva*-devotees with one accord considered service enthused by the superiority of love of *Śiva* as the royal way to God and upheld it as one's supreme goal in life. Hence,

from the king down to his lowliest subject, one reads of their reverence towards *Śiva*-devotees, who were immersed in truth, love and the *aruḷ* (grace) of *Śiva*. It is for this reason, even after intense study of their lives, it is difficult to produce a life of things which are right and things which are wrong to be accepted as a universal code.

For *Cēkkiḷār* faith in *Śiva* can be commended only in terms of its fulfilment in the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* who have shown the *Śaivite* way. Their way of *Śaiva-nēti* (சைவநீதி) is commended only in so far as the *Śaivite* are equipped to put themselves with loving sympathy inside the doubts of doubting, the questions of the questioners, and the loneliness of those who have lost their way. True worship of *Śiva* for this *nāyaṇmār* consists in the treatment of all with compassion; it is an ethics of love. It is possible because, for *Cēkkiḷār*, there is the basic unity among all beings as creatures of *Śiva*. Therefore, the *Śaiva* morality for the *nāyaṇmār* is way of life or ‘right conduct of life’ (நன்னெறி: *nannēri*); living the *Śaiva* way of life is of significant importance for the *nāyaṇmār*. Due to this righteous living, the life of the *nāyaṇmār* testifies to the fact they had confronted fearlessly opposing factions and sects resolved conflicts with the armour of faith and purity. It has been their character to adapt and adopt attitudes of conduct relevant to the times from episodes of human actions and reactions, failures and success and thus accommodate to new situations of life. They embodied in their own lives and teachings the universal logic of righteousness in which the rational and ethical elements were integrated into a whole.

Above all for *Cēkkiḷār* the *nāyaṇmār* are servitors of God and human persons. Service is the main axis and focus of personal and social norm and value. Yet,

achievement of such a high ideal depends on how one act morally and the consideration one has for others. Such an ethos is a reflection of the abundance of love that overflows from a right conduct of life or way of living according to *Śaiva* way of life. The emphasis that human virtues are derived from a relationship with the Lord; *Śiva* through his grace enables one to become virtuous, loving and a moral responsible being is central to the religious ethos of the *nāyaṇmār*. It is *Śiva's aruḷ* (grace) that makes human actions meaningful and moral. *Cēkkiḷār* sees virtuous or moral life as the practical expression of the dynamism of *Śiva's aruḷ* (grace). Divine grace and human virtue form an essential unity; human action is incapable on its own, to become a moral action. Virtues are principles through which *Śiva's aruḷ* (grace) becomes active. In this sense, *Śaivite* morality is nothing less than humanness that flows from *Śiva's aruḷ* (grace). The cultivation of a virtuous disposition, moral character and good behaviour then become fundamental to *Śaivite* living. A good person, therefore, is a moral person who lives virtuously and whose character resembles divine virtue. *Cēkkiḷār's* concern is not so much about the observance of moral codes with specific concern on 'rightness' and 'wrongness' of action, but rather on what sort of humanness one 'ought' to exemplify and the type of virtuous life one ought to live out in order to attain *Śiva* 'the Lord of all virtues' (அறவாணர்: *aravānar*) (PP.135).

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

The thesis was written to study and to elucidate the mysticism of the *nāyaṇmār* as presented in *Cēkkiḷār's Periya Purāṇam*. By placing the text in its historical context, by studying its theological framework, and bringing together its mysticism scattered in the hymns and by analysis, it was argued that in the *Periya Purāṇam*, mystical experience results not only in the emergence of an intimate vision of *Śiva* (PP. 300)⁸⁷⁵ but it also motivated the *nāyaṇmār* to live an integral moral life (நன்னெறி: *nanneri*) i.e. a 'right conduct of life' and to cultivate a 'right attitude of the self' i.e. to engage in service to *Śiva* and His devotees (PP. 3514, 1948).⁸⁷⁶ Active engagement with the circumstances of everyday life where both the love of God and love of fellow devotees come together to encourage and reinforce *nāyaṇmār's* instincts for service especially for fellow devotees done in mystical state through moral living, one may call it as the contemplative awareness of *Śiva* within while being in service (*tonṭu* : தொண்டு) and moral living (நன்னெறி: *nanneri*) is a significant feature of the *Periya Purāṇam* and its mysticism as demonstrated in this study. Therefore, *Cēkkiḷār* presents a mysticism not in a simple sense of 'unitive' experience of a devotee to divine, but for him it implies a constant 're-focus', a 'unifying' experience. It implies a 'unifying' experience of the devotee to *Śiva*

⁸⁷⁵ 'பந்தம் வீடுத ரும்பர மன்கழல்...' (பெ.பு. 300).

'It is the feet of *Śiva* that are the source of bondage and release and it was on those feet that I once set my mind' (PP. 300).

⁸⁷⁶ '...பாவியேன் தன்னை அன்று வலிய ஆட்கொண்டபற்று...' (பெ.பு. 3514).

'...ஆண்டதிரு முடி எடுத்துப் பெருமழுவர் தொண்டு அல்லால் பிறிதுஇசையோம்...' (பெ.பு. 1948).
'Years ago in grace you made me your servant' (PP. 3514). 'We are committed to nothing but to the service of the Lord *Śiva*' (PP.1948).

(*Śiva-jñānam* : சிவஞானம்)⁸⁷⁷ as well as a ‘unifying’ experience with other devotees who seeks a vision of *Śiva* to be in His service (*Śiva - toṇṭu* : சிவ தொண்டு)(PP. 342)⁸⁷⁸. This understanding of mysticism of the *Periya Purāṇam* as love of God which is expressed profoundly in their service to fellow devotees in a mystical state through the moral living is the contribution of this thesis to the understanding of mysticism.

What is of significance of the *Periya Purāṇam* as examined in this research is that, therefore, in this hagiographical narratives each of the *nāyaṇmār* not only emerges with a distinct personality as *Cēkkiḷār*, the hagiographer, moulds each *nāyaṇār* to an archetypal conception but also their single-minded, unconditional commitment to the service of *Śiva* (*Śiva - toṇṭu*: சிவ தொண்டு) and His devotees (*Śiva - toṇṭar - toṇṭu* : சிவ தொண்டர் தொண்டு) is presented as model to inspire and to develop intense devotion to *Śiva* and through this devotion to bring the Tamil *Śaivite* community together (PP. 5)⁸⁷⁹. Hence as explained in this study, a typical *nāyaṇār* is a paradigm of the visceral experience of God, of unmediated relationship with him and of the ability to give dramatic expression to devotional love.

⁸⁷⁷ ‘...ஆளுடைய பிள்ளையாராய் ... தாவுஇல்தனிச் சிவஞான சம்பந்தர் ஆயினார்’...

‘... சிவஞானம் பவம் ஆதனை அறமாற்றும் பாங்கினில் ஓங்கிய ஞானம்...’ (பெ.பு. 1972-1973).

‘By virtue of this gift, the child came to be called “the child who is *Śiva*’s own possession”, and “*Tiruñāṇa Campantar*”, the one uniquely endowed with the divine wisdom...’ (PP. 1972).

⁸⁷⁸ ‘பெருமையால் தம்மை ஒப்பார் பேணலால் எம்மைப் பெற்றார் ஒருமையால் உலகைவெல்வார் ஊனம்மேல் ஒன்றும் இல்லார் அருமை ஆம் நிலையில் நின்றார் அன்பினால் இன்பம் ஆர்வார் இருமையும் கடந்து நின்றார் இவரை நீ அடைவாய் என்று’ (பெ.பு. 342).

“There is no one who can compare them,” he said, “By their devotion they have attained me. By their single-minded service, they have conquered the world. They have no imperfection. No one else could reach a state like theirs. Their love for me has brought them untold bliss. They have passed beyond the play of opposites” (PP. 342).

⁸⁷⁹ ‘அளவு இலாத பெருமையர் ஆகிய அளவு இலாதஅடி யார்புகழ் கூறுவேன்

அளவுகூட உரைப்பு அரிது ஆயினும் அளவுஇல் ஆசை தூர்ப்ப அறைகுவேன்’ (பெ.பு. 5).

‘The greatness of the devotees is beyond measure; beyond measure too their fame, which I am going to relate. Although to tell even the smallest measure of it is impossible, my measureless zeal will spur me on to the endeavour’ (PP. 5).

What is of noticeable distinction of *Cēkkiḷār* in achieving this ostensible purpose, as explicated in this study, lay on particularly in the ease with which he straddles diverse categories in Indian religion, literature and culture: pan-Indian and vernacular domains; classical and popular literature; universal and local themes in devotion and the Hindu religious tradition; scripture and popular songs; written and oral texts; the celebration of tradition and the poetry of an innovative movement; and personal and communal religion. In this way, *Cēkkiḷār* not only utilised pan-Indian and Tamil imagery in his composition to inspire the *Śaiva* fold with visual representations of *Śiva* but also incorporated ancient mythological representations with anthropocentric and nature-oriented settings and human relationships to express and to present the *nāyamṇār*'s devotion to *Śiva* and their mysticism of service and moral living. Hence, *Cēkkiḷār*'s poetry bridges the classical Tamil world and the devotional milieu in which pan-Indian myths are localized in a Tamil landscape and infused with Tamil modes or relating to the divine; his poetry provided a powerful new synthesis of the values of Brahmanical Hinduism and those of the indigenous Tamil civilization, affirming, celebrating, and transforming both traditions. By this, as made clear in this study, *Cēkkiḷār* appears not only has a great hagiographer but also great synthesizer who tries to give a comprehensive view of life.

Besides, what is even more distinct of this ideal of religious service (தொண்டு: *tonṭu*) and moral living as conceptualized in the *Periya Purāṇam* as affirmed in this study is that it is predominantly Tamil in conception. These ideals of the *Periya Purāṇam* have much in common with the ideals as illustrated by the ancient Tamil institutions of itinerant bards and by the elaborate scheme of landscape-emotion association in the classical love poetry of 'aham' [(அகம்: inner or love i.e. *aṇṇu* (அன்பு) poems] and

‘*puram*’ [(புறம்: ‘outer’ or public poems about kings, war, heroism, death, codes of conduct and so on)]. These contexts of the poetry provide a provocative outline of some of the important social, cultural, and religious themes in *Tamiḷnāṭu* during period of the *nāyaṇmār*, as well as the imagery that will inform the work of *Cēkkiḷār*. Most importantly, the literary devices of early Tamil literature were clearly and cleverly utilized to stress the affective element of moral living and the heroic aspect of service of the *nāyaṇmār*, so as to emphasis the continuity and discontinuity of the Tamil tradition.

Significantly, the intense ‘humanism’ of early Tamil society, as shown in this study, is projected and transferred to *Śiva*. In this manner, the *Śiva* of the *nāyaṇmār* of the *Periya Purāṇam* is not just an awesome deity and the manifestation of the potentially ‘dangerous’ yet a ‘sacred power’ (*ananku*) that manifested itself in diverse forms in particular persons, places and objects, and had to be carefully controlled on the Tamil model: *Śiva* and His devotees are bound to each other by a powerful mutual love. The intimate nature of this relationship comes across in the many images and terms of endearment with which the *nāyaṇmār* address their God: *Śiva* is addressed as ‘father’, ‘mother’, ‘friend’, ‘strength of the defenceless’, ‘wisdom of devotees’, ‘nectar of the enlightened’ etc (PP. 566)⁸⁸⁰. In this way *Cēkkiḷār* drew extensively on the poetic forms and conventions of *Caṅkam* literary tradition and transposed them into a religious context as this study has elaborated.

⁸⁸⁰ கனியா னையின் ஈர் உரியாய் சிவதா
எனியார் வலியாம் இறைவா சிவதா
அனியார் அடியார் அறிவே சிவதா
தெனியார் அமுதே சிவதா சிவதா (பெ.பு. 566).

What is also noted in this study is that, it is from these poetries that *Cēkḱilār* draws on to give voice to the *nāyaṇmār*'s uncompromising love of *Śiva* and their conviction that *Śiva* is the 'divine hero' who conquers evil through His 'heroic deeds' and through whom the devotee can conquer death (PP. 567)⁸⁸¹. The varied scenes of love and heroism in the classical poetry become the stages of devotion to *Śiva* and the arenas of His heroic activities. By doing so, *Śiva*'s heroic exploits or deeds are presented as expressive of purposive and meaningful characteristics and which often reflect historical, legendary or mythological events as stated. The many battles that *Śiva* waged against the *asuras* or demons are simply allegories to combat that in which every individual participates between the true power and hostile forces. The functional role of the *Periya Purāṇam* emphasises its impact on the lives of the *Śaivites*. Hymns of praise are woven by the creative genius of *Cēkḱilār* with reference to *Śiva*'s feet of heroism, and a kind of synthetic appeal emerges from the theology of *Cēkḱilār*. Insight into the use of mythic epithets, formulae and repetitions in the refrains and similes bring out not only the beauty and quality of *Periya Purāṇam* as a literature, they become foundation to perpetuate an integral vision of *Śiva* which stood as foundation to *Cēkḱilār*'s theology of service and moral living as this study has demonstrated. The goal or the aspiration of such a theological vision and mystical living in the *Periya Purāṇam* is 'to be like *Śiva*' (PP. 143)⁸⁸².

⁸⁸¹881 'The flowers to adorn your matted locks, the elephant has scattered in the street! Lord *Śiva*, in your wrath you burnt the cities of your enemies' (PP. 567).

‘ஆறும் மதியும் அணியும் சடைமேல் ஏறும் மலரைக் கரிசிந்துவதே வேறுஉள் நினைவார் புரம்வெந்து அவியச் சீறும் சிலையாய் சிவதாசிவதா’ (பெ.பு. 567).

⁸⁸²882 ‘கேடும் ஆக்கமும் கெட்ட திருவினார் ஓடும் செம்பொனும் ஒக்கவே நோக்குவார் கூடும் அன்பினில் கும்பிடலே அன்றி வீடும் வேண்டா விறலின் விளங்கினார்’ (பெ.பு 143).

‘...They do not seek heaven for themselves, but are content to be born into the world and to worship the Lord in love. That is the measure of their victory’ (PP. 143).

In this way, for *Cēkkiḷār*, as highlighted in this study, the *nāyaṇmār* by their mysticism of service and moral living not only familiarised the masses with the heroic exploits of *Śiva* but also shared the nature of this nature of *Śiva* and behaved liked Him. The shedding of the blood in sacrifice of the the *nāyaṇmār*, therefore, is both the supreme manifestation of *aṇpu* (love), as the offering of one's life to the beloved, whether in self-sacrifice or in the offering of a representative substitute; it is also the means by which offences against *aṇpu* (love), may be expiated, by payment of the ultimate price. It is therefore as explained, that the *nāyaṇmār*'s acts of fanatical devotion are motivated by selflessness directed towards *Śiva*'s devotees as much as to *Śiva* himself.

Most significant attribute of *Śiva* in the *Periya Purāṇam*, however is that, He is a God of love. Whatever *Śiva* does, He does out of His 'madness' – with a sense of fanatical love - He has for His devotees. *Śiva* is madly in love with his devotees. If *Śiva* releases the *nāyaṇmār* from their path of wickedness granting them *aruḷ* (grace) and taking them captive (தடுத்தாட்கொள்ளல்: *taṭuttāṭ koḷḷal*) or taking control of their very self, the subjective result is that *Śiva* makes the *nāyaṇmār* fanatical or mad. To be captivated by *Śiva* is to become like Him; and to become like *Śiva* is to become mad i.e. to be madly in love with Him or fanatical about their service to Him. Though there is no clear evidence to prove that the *nāyaṇmār* imitated *Śiva*, however, *Cēkkiḷār* narrates there is a certain sense of 'madness' created by ecstatic awareness instilled by *Śiva*'s *aruḷ* (grace) of all that the world offers. In this ecstatic awareness the *nāyaṇmār* co-mingled in the divine madness of *Śiva*; His devotees also appear to be mad with ardent desire to be at His service. What is important to note is primarily that *Śiva* both represent in himself and offers His devotees participation in a new kind of awareness, a type of realization

opposed to ordinary modes of experience. We might call it a mystical state of consciousness where not just social segregation based on caste system is abandoned, but a sense of being in His service is instilled.

In their ‘unitive’ experiences of becoming one with Him, and seeing the unity of all things in *Śiva*, therefore, the *nāyaṇmār* promoted harmonious relationships with others, which in turn developed virtues of charity, forbearance and tolerance. Therefore, *Cēkkiḷār* presents that the God of the *nāyaṇmār* is not the passionless or impersonal. As stressed in this study, while remaining Lord of the universe, *Śiva* is also represented as one who acts in *aruḷ* (grace) in the world (PP. 286)⁸⁸³ to bring men and women into relationship with himself and thus release from the fetters which bind them. Hence, *Cēkkiḷār* presents mysticism not as a doctrine of deep thought to realize God (இறைநிலை இணைவுக் கோட்பாடு: *Irainilai iṇaivuk kōṭpāṭu*). It is neither an understanding of mysticism which reflects the silence of the worshipper before God nor that gives explanation to mysticism in terms of ‘passivity’ and ‘numbness’. This view can be equated with a Tamil concept known as ‘*summa iru*’ (சும்மா இரு: ‘Be quiet or still’) which has a number of meanings with reference to the context – freedom, silence, often, inactivity etc. For *Cēkkiḷār*, mysticism is oneness and madness and this is what the thesis has demonstrated and contributes to the understanding of mysticism. Mysticism in the It implies a ‘unifying’ experience of the devotee to *Śiva* (*Śiva-jñānam* : சிவஞானம்)⁸⁸⁴ as

⁸⁸³ ‘...அற்புதமோ சிவன் அருளோ அறியேன் என்று...’ (பெ.பு. 286).
‘He stood amazed. “What can this be?” He wondered ... or perhaps it is a miracle of *Śiva*’s grace’ (PP. 286).

⁸⁸⁴ ‘...ஆளுடைய பிள்ளையாராய் ... தாவுஇல்தனிச் சிவஞான சம்பந்தர் ஆயினார்’... ‘... சிவஞானம் பவம் ஆதனை அறமாற்றும் பாங்கினில் ஓங்கிய ஞானம்...’ (பெ.பு. 1972-1973).
‘By virtue of this gift, the child came to be called “the child who is *Śiva*’s own possession”, and “*Tiruñāṇa Campantar*”, the one uniquely endowed with the divine wisdom...’ (PP. 1972).

well as a ‘unifying’ experience with other devotees who seeks a vision of *Śiva* to be in His service (*Śiva - toṇṭu* : சிவ தொண்டு) (PP. 342)⁸⁸⁵. This understanding of mysticism of the *Periya Purāṇam* as love of God which is expressed profoundly in their service to fellow devotees in a mystical state through the moral living is the contribution of this thesis to the understanding of mysticism.

Part of the the strong popular appeal of the *Śaivism* practised and proclaimed by the *nāyaṇmār* as presented in the *Periya Purāṇam*, therefore, undoubtedly lay in its warm, personal character. Repeatedly *Cēkkiḷār* draws our attention to the fact that the garlands of song which the *nāyaṇmār* presented to *Śiva* on their journeys were in Tamil, described as that which is also adored as ‘pure Tamil’ (‘செந்தமிழ்’ : *centtamiḷ*) (PP. 260)⁸⁸⁶, ‘divine Tamil’ (‘தெய்வத் தமிழ்’ : *daivattamiḷ*) (PP. 975),⁸⁸⁷ ‘immortal Tamil’ (‘அசைதல் இல்லாத செழுந்தமிழ்’ : *asaital illāthe celuntamiḷ*) (PP. 1927)⁸⁸⁸. Because the

⁸⁸⁵ ‘பெருமையால் தம்மை ஒப்பார் பேணலால் எம்மைப் பெற்றார் ஒருமையால் உலகைவெல்வார் ஊனம்மேல் ஒன்றும் இல்லார் அருமை ஆம் நிலையில் நின்றார் அன்பினால் இன்பம் ஆர்வார் இருமையும் கடந்து நின்றார் இவரை நீ அடைவாய் என்று’ (பெ.பு. 342).

“There is no one who can compare them,” he said, “By their devotion they have attained me. By their single-minded service, they have conquered the world. They have no imperfection. No one else could reach a state like theirs. Their love for me has brought them untold bliss. They have passed beyond the play of opposites” (PP. 342).

⁸⁸⁶ ‘... திருக்கோலக் கா இறைஞ்சிச் செந்தமிழ் மலைகள் பாடி’ (பெ.பு. 260).

‘...he offered worship singing garlands of pure Tamil’ (PP. 260).

The earliest usage of the term *centtamiḷ* (‘செந்தமிழ்’) is traced to *Tolkāppiyam*. It is the “standard, ‘correct’, ‘polished’ language sanctioned by the norm of *ilakkaṇam* (இலக்கணம்) and used in *ilakkiyam* (இலக்கியம்) as the linguistic vehicle of high literary culture... in contrast to *koṭuntamiḷ*, lit. ‘crooked’ (in contrast to ‘straight’) language, the unpolished, non-standard, non-literary language obviously exhibiting features of regional/local (horizontal) and social (vertical) dialects” (Zvelebil, 1992, p. 135).

⁸⁸⁷ ‘... ஞாலம் அளந்த மேன்மைத் தெய்வத் தமிழும் தரும் செவ்வி மணம் செய் ஈரம்’ (பெ.பு. 975).

‘... there divine Tamil whose glory spans the world nurtured the fragrance of kindness and beauty’ (PP. 975).

⁸⁸⁸ ‘... அசைவுஇல் செழுமதமிழ்வழக்கே அயல்வழக்கின் துறைவெல்ல’ (பெ.பு. 1927).

‘... the cause of immortal Tamil triumphed over all other tongues ...’ (PP. 1927).

hymns were sung in the language of the common people, they readily became vehicle of popular devotion, and have remained so ever since.

Indeed, through their emphasis on *Śiva* as their personal God, and on the expression of love in song and service, *nāyaṇmār* of the *Periya Purāṇam* presented not only a formidable challenge to the model of the leader found among the Buddhists and Jainism when the boundaries between *Śiva*'s devotees and competing groups such as Buddhism and Jainism were just starting to be articulated in a self-conscious way. It is clear from the hymns of the *Periya Purāṇam* that the 'enemy' was not Brahmanical Hinduism, as studied, but Buddhism and Jainism which were seen as 'alien' to Tamil culture, defined by the Tamil *Śaiva* religiosity as an intrinsically Tamil Hindu culture (PP. 1928)⁸⁸⁹. Speaking to god in one's mother tongue was pivotal in uniting the Tamil community across the region, with a remarkable message of oneness among the Tamil *Śaivites*. In this way, the vision of Tamil *Śaiva* religiosity based on service and moral living which in turn is embodied in lives of the *nāyaṇmār* and in the vernacular language of Tamil laid the foundation for an identity-defining kind of *Śaivism* of ethno-cultural nature: a remarkable contribution of the *Periya Purāṇam* to Tamil *Śaivism* as this study elucidates. It also affirms the fact, as made clear in this study, that the theological vision of the *Periya Purāṇam* became an effective instrument of enculturation.

⁸⁸⁹ 'அவம்பெருக்கும்புல் அறிவின் அமண்முதல் ஆம்பரசமயப் பவம்பெருக்கும் புரைநெறிகள் பாழ்பட நல்ஊழிதொறும் தவம் பெருக்கும் சண்பையிலே தாஇல் சராசரங்கள் எலாம் சிவம்பெருக்கும் பிள்ளையார் திருஅவதாரம் செய்தார்' (பெ.பு. 1929).

'So it came about the child of God was born at *Caṇpai*, where austerities were practised in abundance from age to age. Through him all creatures were to attain *Śiva*, and Jainism and those other base religion which propagate falsehood and cause sin to abound came to their downfall' (PP. 1929).

Even more so, in his medieval hagiography *Cēkkiḷār* extends and synthesizes the same broad themes of *Caṅkam* poetry not only in his presentation of the heroic deeds of *Śiva* but also in terms of life's of the saints themselves. The correspondences between the bards and the 'sacred power' (*aṇanku*: அணங்கு), their poetry and wandering to places, between their emotions (especially love) and particular landscapes, and the immortality conceptualized in the form of heroism in service and moral living are a uniquely Tamil heritage and they are the subject of the Tamil *Caṅkam* poetry. In their passionate love of their God and of the landscapes of their country, the *nāyaṇmār* of the *Periya Purāṇam* are presented by *Cēkkiḷār* as closer to the bards of the ancient Tamil. They have in common a pattern of service to the Lord *Śiva* which involved travelling with a band of devotees from place to place, and worshipping the Lord at each local shrine. To express their devotion and to propagate their message of service, they composed and sang devotional hymns in *Śiva's* honour wherever they went. In the accounts of those pilgrimage journeys, *Cēkkiḷār* is careful to specify not only the particular location and occasion on which many of their hymns were composed, with a zeal that can sometime seem wearisome but also specify the kind of service they rendered at those particular places they visited. No doubt, in this way, *Cēkkiḷār* is satisfying the local pride of those shrines which the *nāyaṇmār* celebrated in their compositions by publically documenting the connection.

It is for this reason, Tamil *Śaivism* flourished mainly because of the active role the *nāyaṇmār* played in forging ideological links between various aspects of Tamil culture earlier dominated by the ethos of indigenous war heroes and bard in terms of devotional service to *Śiva*. It indicates that *Cēkkiḷār*, as explained in this study, distinctively tries to

show that in their passionate love of their God and of the landscapes of their country, the *nāyaṇmār* were not only closer to the bards of ancient Tamil but intimately connected themselves with the Tamil tradition. In consistently interpreting the *nāyaṇmār*'s life of devotion in terms of 'history' and 'spiritual autobiography,' as demonstrated in this study, *Cēkkiḷār* is not only a model Tamil *Śaiva* religiosity but also is very much a spokesman for the tradition as established in this research. In the final analysis, the narratives of the Tamil *Śaiva* saints have endured, not only because they are powerful religious texts, but also because they are deeply embedded in the matrix of enduring values in Tamil culture and civilization as this study as expounded.

Further, in the vision of the *Periya Purāṇam*, service and moral living are not merely the frameworks of the lives of the *nāyaṇmār*, but the living core of their religious experience (PP. 342)⁸⁹⁰. In this vision, experience and expression are essentially related, and the rootedness of the *nāyaṇmār*'s expression of their devotion to *Śiva* in service and moral living speaks for the central religious experience shared by all Tamil *Śaivites*: the love of *Śiva* who is seen as domiciling in their land, in their temples and in His devotees. Therefore, the loving relationship which the devotees enjoy with the Lord is naturally and inevitably expressed in practical service becomes the pathway to union with *Śiva*, and also fulfilment of that journey. This devotion is the loving response towards God or reflexive act of love which God's unconditional love for humankind evokes in the human

⁸⁹⁰ 'பெருமையால் தம்மை ஒப்பார் பேணலால் எம்மைப் பெற்றார் ஒருமையால் உலகைவெல்வார் ஊனம்மேல் ஒன்றும் இல்லார் அருமை ஆம் நிலையில் நின்றார் அன்பினால் இன்பம் ஆர்வார் இருமையும் கடந்து நின்றார் இவரை நீ அடைவாய் என்று' (பெ.பு. 342).

"There is no one who can compare them," he said, "By their devotion they have attained me. By their single-minded service, they have conquered the world. They have no imperfection. No one else could reach a state like theirs. Their love for me has brought them untold bliss. They have passed beyond the play of opposites" (PP. 342).

heart. In the vision of the *Periya Purāṇam*, therefore, service and moral living is not merely the framework of the lives of the *nāyaṇmār*, but the living core of their religious experience as this study has elucidated. In the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkkiḷār* raises service and moral living to the supreme level of religiousness, human experience and expression: they are the foundation of union, wholeness, deliverance and ultimate meaning as this research has explicated.

In this way, *Cēkkiḷār* tries to emphasise that once devotion to *Śiva* implies participation in Him. In other words, devotion is relational, it conveys the sense of choice, possession, attachment and loyalty; it joins the devotee and God. However, to be clear, devotion here is not just an emotional state: without action, devotion has no meaning. By so doing, *Cēkkiḷār* nuances the concept of devotion in a more meaningful way – he links devotion with duty, because he implies that a true devotee must ‘do’ something, he must ‘act’ for the divine; he must perform service. Hence, service becomes the dominant means of religious dedication. Therefore, religion of devotion expressed in act and attitude is essentially a religion of the warmed heart and that of the *nāyaṇmār* of Tamil *Śaivism*: and that *Cēkkiḷār* holds that the symbolism and meanings of devotion are best realized through the study of the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* as this study has done. If it might be said of the Tamil *Śaiva* saints that they ‘teach’; by example, what they ‘teach’ is not the content of devotional behaviours, but rather the integrity of action motivated by *aṇpu* or love.

It is for this reason it is observable that *Cēkkiḷār* does not call the *nāyaṇmār* as ‘believers’, in the sense of the one who gives assent to certain doctrines, but a ‘devotee’.

Most importantly, the *nāyaṇmār* were identified as *aṭiyār* (அடியார்); the ones who have taken refuge at the feet of the Lord, as his slave or servant, or who has placed his head beneath the Lord's feet (PP. 337)⁸⁹¹. Devotional service, therefore, is the most striking the feature of the religiosity of the *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam*. Such service is summed up in one of the most important sections of the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 356-357)⁸⁹². In various other places, *Cēkkiḷār* enumerates several ways of active devotion (i) collective praise of Lord (PP. 350-359), (ii) signing or reciting the named and glories of God (PP. 931-972), (iii) recalling God and his divine activities (PP. 4220-4225), (iv) serving his feet and those of the devotees (PP. 440-466), (v) bowing down to God and his devotees and befriending them (PP. 4017-4026). All the *nāyaṇmār* model their devotional practices on one or more of these fundamental paradigms. The entire *Periya Purāṇam*, in fact as made clear in this study, is meant to assist in this endeavour, offering systematic methodology and illustrative stories to facilitate it.

In them service to the devotee of *Śiva*, action springing from an attitude of loving devotion, is a significant religious expression and a highest ideal delineated in the *Periya*

⁸⁹¹ 'His sacred feet, like the red lotus, blossom in the heart of those who love him. Around those feet, like beetles round the lotus flower, resound the everlasting Vedas, Now those feet stand before me, unworthy as I am, and have vouchsafed to me the wine of heavenly bliss' (PP. 337).

‘மன்பெருந்திரு மாமறை வண்டு சூழ்ந்து அன்பர் சிந்தை அலர்ந்த செந்தாமரை நன்பெரும் பரமானந்த நல்மது எந்தரத்தும் அளித்து எதிர்நின்றன’ (பெ.பு. 337).

⁸⁹² ‘...Their love for the Lord Śiva is the greatest blessings of their lives. They have learned and practice faultlessly the duties of Śaivite path. They are steadfast in charity and penance, and impeccable in doing what is right. Their life is marked by modesty, patience, and domestic virtue, and is acclaimed by all. They are noble in conduct, humble in spirit, and godlike in character. In this life they have attained the first of all beings, and made him the object of their worship. In the future, there is no further goal left for them to attain. They remain without rival, without peer’ (PP. 356-357).

‘ஞானமே முதலா நான்கும் நவைஅறத் தெரிந்து மிக்கார் தானமும் தவமும் வல்லார் தகுயின் பகுதி சார்ந்தார் ஊனம்மேல் ஒன்றும் இல்லார் உலகு எலாம் புகழ்ந்து போற்றும் மானமும் பொறையும் தாங்கி மனைஅறம் புரிந்து வாழ்வார். செம்மையால் தணிந்த சிந்தைத் தெய்வ வேதியர்கள் ஆனார் மும்மை ஆயிரவர் தாங்கள் போற்றிட முதல்வனாரை இம்மையே பெற்று வாழ்வார் இனிப்பெறும் பேறு ஒன்று இல்லார் தம்மையே தமக்கு ஒப்பான நிலைமையால் தலைமை சார்ந்தார்’ (பெ.பு. 356-357).

Purāṇam. It is interesting that a devotee of *Śiva* is considered as a living presence of God (PP. 342)⁸⁹³. Likewise attendance to all the needs of a devotee of *Śiva* replicates the service for the Lord. In such service to a devotee of *Śiva* one develops humility, which is essential for spiritual progress. Such service to a devotee of *Śiva* purifies the mind and renders it for to receive spiritual knowledge. Thus learning the science of devotional service and engaging in it in practical way, the devotees come to the stage of love of God. This flows from the belief that God is an epitome of both being the master and servant and that end of spiritual learning is to be of service and do well to others. The bliss of merging into oneness with *Śiva* cannot compare with the joy that comes from serving Him in his devotees. In this way *Cēkṇilār*'s notion of service as a devotional service articulates it as a selfless act - indeed, its selflessness is an indicator of its legitimacy as a form of devotion. For devotees, it provides similar motivation for a range of voluntary activities. According to *Cēkṇilār*, self-sacrificing magnanimous service is the highest worship of God. In the *nāyaṇmār*'s life in particular, therefore, one encounters an ongoing tension between mysticism and an interior perspective, and other i.e. devotee-oriented, charismatic, public persona. However, *Cēkṇilār* does not struggle with the temptation to allow one or other aspects of the Tamil saint's life to dominate. He shows that the *nāyaṇmār*'s were in one with *Śiva* while they did service to other devotees of *Śiva*.

⁸⁹³ பெருமையால் தம்மை ஒப்பார் பேணலால் எம்மைப் பெற்றார் ஒருமையால் உலகைவெல்வார் ஊனம்மேல் ஒன்றும் இல்லார் அருமை ஆம் நிலையில் நின்றார் அன்பினால் இன்பம் ஆர்வார் இருமையும் கடந்து நின்றார் இவரை நீ அடைவாய் என்று' (பெ.பு. 342).

"There is no one who can compare them," he said, "By their devotion they have attained me. By their single-minded service, they have conquered the world. They have no imperfection. No one else could reach a state like theirs. Their love for me has brought them untold bliss. They have passed beyond the play of opposites" (PP. 342).

However, the saints worship only *Śaiva* devotees, especially ascetics, who belong to one of the six sects that the agamas recognize as legitimate form of *Śaivism*. The horizon of the typical *nāyaṇmār* altruism is thus severely limited by sectarian and ideological concerns. Not so the poet-saints who, despite their hostility to rival sectarians, are shown to be moved to acts of great generosity towards common people by a simple, humane compassion as this study has revealed. Aspect of the image of the compassionate leader might have been borrowed by *Cēkkiḷār* from the saintly ideal of his hated rivals, the Jains and the Buddhist. It is equally likely, though, that Jains, Buddhist, *Śaivas* alike were tapping into a common source, the ancient civilization of the Tamils. Courage and integrity combine with passion and the ability to love deeply, as also with humanism, compassion, and fundamentally altruistic outlook, in the persona of the ideal warrior of the *Caṅkam* literature, the hero of *aham* (interior) as well as *puram* (exterior) poems. Among the ideal hero's outstanding qualities is giving i.e. a generous giver. This mix of qualities on the ancient model permits *Cēkkiḷār* to unite the values emphasized in the poets' narrative with those in the stories of the *nāyaṇmār*, fashioning a flexible *nāyaṇmār* - persona in terms of the old warrior values as well as the more specific ideal of farmer-householder – *vēḷālar* – generosity – *vēḷālanamai* (வேளான்மை) – that was the dominant ethos of the agricultural society of the time.

It must be pointed out, however, that although each of the narrative of *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* bear the imprint of the each of the *nāyaṇmār*'s unique personality, attitudes and experience, especially in the cases that they directly deal with the intimate aspects of their relationship with *Śiva*, we also hear a strong collective voice as pointed out in this study. The devotion that they exemplified through their lives is

remarkably similar and is expressed in a shared vocabulary and imagery. The hymns are products of the individual saints personality and experience interacting with a shared Tamil *Śaiva* vision of devotion to *Śiva*. Once again, the communal dimension of Tamil *Śaiva* devotion comes to the fore in the *Periya Purāṇam*; the *nāyaṇmār* and community come together in the ideal of the ‘the devotee’ (PP. 4174-4175). At one level the *nāyaṇmār* included all the worshipers of *Śiva* in the community of devotees: not only people who exclusively adhered to Tamil *Śaiva* cultic practice but also members of the other *Śaiva* sects whose extreme ritual and ascetic practices were abhorrent to the followers of devotional mode of worshipers of *Śiva* (PP. 4152-4159). The author of the *Periya Purāṇam* assert that unswerving devotion to *Śiva* overrides all other affiliations and markers of identity and is the supreme criterion for respect, friendship and communal consciousness among the Tamil *Śaiva*. The key lies in the ideal of service itself, which is the highest qualification for becoming servant of *Śiva*. Therefore, the *nāyaṇmār*’s extraordinary devotion to *Śiva* manifested in their immensely powerful, mantra-like hymns and service, makes them leaders of the community, and charismatic figures in their own right in the *Periya Purāṇam*.

Therefore, the author of the *Periya Purāṇam* presents its mysticism as common to all. The emphasis is on an idea of a union with God whom every individual can enter into communion irrespective of craft, religion, gender, caste or religious affiliation. This is significant feature of the *Periya Purāṇam* and its mysticism as expounded in this study. The goal of devotional service and moral living is the union with the Lord, where all intervening boundaries are dissolved. Thus whatever position one is in, all of one’s duties can become an offering of love of God, which becomes the highest level of meditation,

intention, or activity. If everyone engages their talents and tendencies in his or her particular occupation with the idea that it is a service to God, then that occupation becomes the means for one's worship and thoughts or meditation on the supreme. Then, by the grace of the Lord, he will be delivered from all earthly attachments. This is the highest perfection of life. In whatever occupation people may be engaged, if they serve the Lord, they will achieve this highest level of success. Given the fact that caste and religious affiliation frequently divided Tamil society more than uniting it, the *Cēkkiḷār's* proposal advocates a regeneration of Tamil society based on a principle of equality and common human values as this research has shown. It is an indication that *Cēkkiḷār's* concerns are focused on the future while it is primarily critical of existing structure of Tamil society; not only had it brought a new vision for the formation of a new Tamil *Śaiva* religiosity but laid the foundation for a movement toward communal solidarity. In order for this vision to be realized, as shown in this study, the *Cēkkiḷār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* affirms its social resistance against the orthodoxy of Brahmanism, their caste superiority, religious exclusiveness and their claim for authority as the sole custodians of Vedic sacrifices. Though such vision did not materialize to the extent of eradicating such caste intolerance which is even visible today, the *Periya Purāṇam's* resistance is at an ideological forefront of the values of an egalitarian society.

It is important to note, as this study has demonstrated, that all the Tamil saints whose lives are narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam* are householders. Through service and moral integrity family life is sanctified in the *Periya Purāṇam*. Family is presented as an ideal environment in which the love of *Śiva* finds practical expression in service and moral living. A significant emphasis is placed on the crafts that were followed by the

Tamil saints. The emphasis is that the Tamil saints cleverly utilized the crafts to support their households and society as a means of service. It raised Tamil society to a higher level of integrity both in words and deeds. Among these householders mentioned in the *Periya Purāṇam*, there are few women. By the dedication in a certain number of the poems to such women in the *Periya Purāṇam*, *Cēkkiḷār* raises the status of women in this society and illustrates their contribution to the success of their households. In the context of the traditional society in which the *Periya Purāṇam* was created, its emphasis is on the equal treatment of men and women as well as marital life; and the emphasis on women as model of devotion of service and moral living is seen today by many to have been revolutionary.

The ideal of service and moral living, therefore, became a persistent symbol which saturated medieval Tamil society and became a communal focus for the integration and participation of the building of a just society. The *Periya Purāṇam* ideals became a mode of participation providing a space to forge socio-political and cultural unity so as to define Tamil identity. Most importantly the *Periya Purāṇam* was incorporated into the new religiosity of the Tamil people and it began to be read in temple and public gatherings. The temple, which was focused on Vedic ritualism, now became a symbol of the aesthetic expression of Tamil society where sculptures and paintings of Tamil saints became rich iconographic subjects representing significant theological and mystical themes from the lives of these saints as depicted in the *Periya Purāṇam*. These representations can be found in *Thillai Nataraja* Temple Chidambaram today. It is an indication that the social revival intended by the *Periya Purāṇam*'s began to take shape through the influence of an inner purity and moral integrity. The *Periya Purāṇam* is not

only the document and expression of an important moment, a turning point in the history of Tamil *Śaivism* and of Tamil regional culture, but a broader cultural phenomenon, one that has been ‘a great living force’ in the lives of the Tamils. Like other formative or fundamental religious texts, the *Periya Purāṇam* has transcended and transformed its literary, religious, and cultural contexts, itself becoming an important, continuing text for Tamil *Śaiva* religiosity. In its capacity as the scripture of the Tamil *Śaiva* sect, this text has had a life of its own and has a function as a symbol and motivator of sectarian and communal identity.

It must be also emphasised, that by the time *Cēkḱilār* wrote the *Periya Purāṇam*, there was already in existence a considerable corpus of literature in the Tamil language, to which the *nāyaṇmār* about whom he wrote had themselves made rich contribution in the form of devotional hymns. Many of their hymns have been preserved and come down to us in the collection known as ‘*Tēvāram*’ (தேவாரம்). As the first literary expression of exemplary ‘leaders’ of Tamil *Śaiva* religiosity whose lives and ideas were centred on a devotion to *Śiva*, *Tēvāram* collection forms part of the *Śaivite* canon of sacred literature, as does the *Periya Purāṇam* itself. It is that *Cēkḱilār*’s work describes the historical circumstances within which many of the ‘*Tēvāram*’ hymns were composed. By giving the canonical hymns a concrete ‘*sitz im leben*’, as this study elucidates, *Cēkḱilār* is adding to their authority and to their appeal as human documents which have service and moral living as essence of their Tamil *Śaiva* religiosity.

It must be said that *Cēkḱilār* was a man of his own time, and cannot be judged by the standards of ours. He was not clearly a trained theologian. Yet, he was so rooted in

Śaivism, he could debate with the best of his contemporaries. True to the tradition of Tamil poetic expression, he could convey a wide spectrum of human feeling. His descriptions of landscape, situation and incident are vivid and evocative. Over all, in spite of the reservations expressed above, he gives us a moving picture of the social and practical outworking of an exalted religious ideal, in which it would be hard for the adherent of any religious faith to deny the operation of divine grace and the moving of the divine spirit. *Cēkkilār* explicates the mysticism of the *nāyaṇmār* within the *Śaiva* tradition that was more familiar to the Tamil tradition of his day. It proposes an inclusive way of life that is a path which incorporates in itself the various valid elements common to all. It calls on all to rise above differences and to hold to what is essential to human values. What is necessary is to recognize *Śiva*, which the *Periya Purāṇam* states that the *nāyaṇmār* existentially experienced as personal, conceived and spoken of in personal terms, and worshiped in a spirit of genuine love for fellow human beings with a specific form of moral behaviour as true worship i.e. the mysticism of service and moral living. *Cēkkilār* concludes his grand work thus: ‘as the nature of delight increases forever proportionate to the oneness of loving mind, the reputation of the devotees of the dancing Lord has been sustained all over the world’ (PP. 4286)⁸⁹⁴.

What should be emphasised here is that, as a twelfth century poetical hagiography that reflects the lives of the *nāyaṇmār*, the mysticism of the *Periya Purāṇam* is neither appreciated, as it deserves to be, nor has it been sufficiently studied in academia. This research makes an academic contribution by introducing this mysticism of service and

⁸⁹⁴ ‘என்றும் இன்பம் பெருகும் இயல்பினால் ஒன்று காதலித்து உள்ளமும் ஓங்கிட மன்றுளார் அடியார் அவர்வான் புகழ் நின்ற தெங்கும் நிலவி உலகெலாம்’ (பெ.பு. 4286).

moral living of the *nāyaṇmār* as narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam* to a wider academic community and to the Tamil *Śaiva* religious community at large. It is emphasised that *Cēkkiḷār*, the author, by imbuing himself in the mystical quest of the early Tamil literary, moral and devotional traditions, textured around these *nāyaṇmār*, initiates a way to *Śiva*. Hence, what is of significance of the *Periya Purāṇam* as examined in this research is that, in this hagiographical narratives each of the *nāyaṇmār* not only emerges with a distinct personality as *Cēkkiḷār* moulds each *nāyaṇmār* to an archetypal conception but also their single-minded and unconditional commitment to the service of *Śiva* (*Śiva - toṇṭu*: சிவ தொண்டு) and His devotees (*Śiva - toṇṭar - toṇṭu* : சிவ தொண்டர் தொண்டு) is presented as model to inspire and to develop intense devotion to *Śiva* and through this devotion to bring the Tamil *Śaivite* community together (PP. 5)⁸⁹⁵. Devotional service, therefore, is the most striking the feature of the religiosity of the *nāyaṇmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam*.

In the final analysis, the narratives of the Tamil *Śaiva* saints have endured, not only because they are powerful religious texts, but also because they are deeply embedded in the matrix of enduring values in Tamil culture and civilization as this study as expounded. It is for this reason, that in the *Periya Purāṇam* unswerving devotion to *Śiva* overrides all other affiliations and markers of identity and is the supreme criterion for respect, friendship and communal consciousness among the Tamil *Śaiva*. The key lies in the ideal of service itself, which is the highest qualification for becoming servant of *Śiva*. Therefore, the author of the *Periya Purāṇam* presents its mysticism as common to

⁸⁹⁵ ‘அளவு இலாத பெருமையர் ஆகிய அளவு இலாதஅடி யார்புகழ் கூறுவேன்
அளவுகூட உரைப்பு அரிது ஆயினும் அளவுஇல் ஆசை தூர்ப்ப அறைகுவேன்’ (பெ.பு. 5).
‘The greatness of the devotees is beyond measure; beyond measure too their fame, which I am going to relate. Although to tell even the smallest measure of it is impossible, my measureless zeal will spur me on to the endeavour’ (PP. 5).

all. The emphasis is on an idea of a union with God whom every individual can enter into communion irrespective of craft, religion, gender, caste or religious affiliation. It is an indication that *Cēkkilār* concerns are focused on the future while it is primarily critical of existing structure of Tamil society; not only had it brought a new vision for the formation of a new Tamil *Śaiva* religiosity but laid the foundation for a movement toward communal solidarity. The *Periya Purāṇam* is not only the document and expression of an important moment, a turning point in the history of Tamil *Śaivism* and of Tamil regional culture, but a broader cultural phenomenon, one that has been ‘a great living force’ in the lives of the Tamils. Like other formative or fundamental religious texts, the *Periya Purāṇam* has transcended and transformed its literary, religious, and cultural contexts, itself becoming an important, continuing text for Tamil *Śaiva* religiosity. In its capacity as the scripture of the Tamil *Śaiva* sect, this text has had a life of its own.

Finally, it should be noted that there are other areas, subjects and specific features of the *Periya Purāṇam* which have not fallen within the scope of the present study that necessitate separate attention, investigation and exploration and are not part of this specific study. These include: Firstly, from the literary perspective, the literary devices that have been employed by *Cēkkilār* to construct his classic and the place of his hagiographical work in the development of the hagiographical narration in Tamil literature; this is to prove *Periya Purāṇam*’s uniqueness in the Tamil literary tradition. Secondly, from a socio-cultural perspective, there is a scope to investigate the imaging of women in the *Periya Purāṇam* and its impact on Tamil religious culture. Thirdly, from a religious-theological perspective, a study to delineate the tenants of Hinduism according to the *Periya Purāṇam*, with its concept of grace according to *Cēkkilār* and a comparative

study of this grace and the mysticism of the Periya Purāṇam with other religious traditions so as to emphasise the *Periya Purāṇam's* uniqueness among religious traditions.

APPENDIX I

SIGNIFICANT FACTS IN THE LIVES OF *NĀYAṆMĀRS* AS PRESENTED IN THE *PERIYA PURĀṆAM*

Nāyaṇar	Caste/ Occupation	Place	Gender	Modality of Liberation/ Devotional Type	Significance
<i>Tirunīlakaṇṭar</i>	Potter/ Pottery	<i>Cōḷa</i> land	Male	Service to Lord's devotees- Mild-devotee	Kept the vow of chastity that he had made in secret to the Lord without harming his wife
<i>Iyarṇpakaiyār</i>	Merchant/ Business	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to Lord's devotees- Harsh-devotee	He tirelessly relived distress of people and considered his wife to be the friend of the Lord
<i>Ilaiyāṇkuṭi Māraṇ</i>	<i>Sudra</i> /Outcaste Cultivation	---	Male	Service to Lord's devotees- Mild-devotee	Even with the little means fed the Lord heartily by cutting down the rafters of the house
<i>Meypporuḷ</i>	Chieftain- King/ King	<i>Cēti</i> land	Male	Service to Lord's devotees- Mild-devotee	Treated his enemy who had come to take his life as a friend of the Lord
<i>Viṇṇmiṇṭar</i>	<i>Vēḷāḷar</i> / Farming	<i>Cēra</i> land	Male	Service to Lord's devotees- Mild-devotee	It was through him that the world came to be enriched by the composition of the Roll of the holy Servants
<i>Amarnīti</i>	Merchant/ Business	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to Lord's devotees- Mild-devotee	Offered him and his Family to the Lord for loss of the Lord's loincloth
<i>Eṇṇipattar</i>	<i>Vēḷāḷar</i> / Farming	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord- Harsh-devotee	He punished the elephant which came to harm the devotees of the Lord
<i>Eṇātināṭaṇ</i>	Forester Caste	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to Lord's devotees-	Took refuge in the sacred ash

				Mild-devotee	of the Lord and offered himself to be killed by the enemy
<i>Kaṇṇappar</i>	Hunter	<i>Toṇṭai</i> land	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord- Mild-devotee	When the eye of the Lord was injured, with his own hand plucked out his eye and laid it on the wound
<i>Kuṇkuliyaḥ Kulayar</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to the Feet of the Lord by offering incense- Mild-devotee	Exchanged his wife's marriage necklace for incense to offer to the Lord
<i>Māṇakkaṇcārāṇ</i>	<i>Vēḷālar/</i> Farming	<i>Kaṇcārūr</i>	Male	Service to Lord's devotees- Harsh-devotee	On his only daughter's wedding day, he gave her hair as an offering to the Lord
<i>Arivāṭṭāyar</i>	<i>Vēḷālar/</i> Farming	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord- Mild-devotee	When he was deprived of the privilege of worshipping of the Lord, he tried to cut his throat with a sickle
<i>Āṇāyar</i>	Shepherd caste	<i>Mēlmaḷanāṭu</i>	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord- Mild-devotee	He played the flute in praise of the Five Letter Prayer of the Lord
<i>Mūrtti</i>	Merchant	<i>Pāṇṭya</i> country	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord- Mild-devotee	Due to lack of sandal wood, He grated his elbow by holding it to the grind stone as a mode of worship.
<i>Murukar</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to Lord's devotees- Mild-devotee	Picked flowers and weaved them into garlands and offered them to the Lord
<i>Rudra Pacupatiyār</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord-	Stood in the water-tank with his hand above his head to

				Mild-devotee	express his devotion by singing the <i>Rudra</i> hymn
<i>Tirunāḷaippōvār</i>	<i>Sudra/Outcaste Farm Labour</i>	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord- Mild-devotee	Bathing in fire, attained the grace of vision of seeing the Lord
<i>Tirukurippuṭ Tonṭar</i>	<i>Ekali caste Washer men</i>	<i>TONṭai</i>	Male	Service to Lord's devotees- Mild-devotee	Bent down over the stone to strike his head against it to express his devotion
<i>Caṇṭēcurar</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord- Harsh-devotee	He cut off his father's feet for desecrating his worship of the Lord
<i>Tirunāvukkaracar</i>	<i>Vēḷāḷar</i>	<i>Tirumuṇaipāṭi</i>	Male	Divine Grace – Mild-devotee	Credited for composing sublime Tamil devotional poetry. Resurrected a dead child.
<i>Kulacciṛaiyār</i>	---	<i>Pāṇṭya</i>	Male	Divine Grace – Mild-devotee	Credited with restoring <i>Śaivism</i> in <i>Pāṇṭya</i> land
<i>Perumīḷalaik</i>	---	---	Male	Divine Grace – Mild-devotee	By yogic power, he was able to meditate on the feet of <i>Cuntarar</i> from a distance
<i>Kāraikkāl Ammaiṭṭar</i>	Merchant	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Female	Service to Lord's devotees- Mild-devotee	Fondly she was called 'Mother' by the Lord. She pleaded for the grace to worship in the form of a disembodied wraith.
<i>Appūti Aṭikal</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Divine Grace – Mild-devotee	Generous host of <i>Tirunāvukkaracar</i> to the point of hiding his son's death
<i>Tirunīlanakkar</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet	Officiated at the wedding of

				of the Lord-Mild-devotee	<i>Cuntarar</i>
<i>Naminanti Aṭikaḷ</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee	Lighted lamps with water
<i>Tiruñāṇacampantar</i>	<i>Śaivite Brahmin</i>	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Divine Grace – Mild-devotee	Was immersed in the Sea of divine wisdom
<i>Eyarkōṇ Kalillāmar</i>	<i>Vēḷāḷar</i>	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee	One who became a great friend of <i>Cuntarar</i> after great conflict and anger with him
<i>Tirumūlar Nāyaṇār</i>	Shepherd caste	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Divine Grace – Mild-devotee	Author of <i>Tirumandiram</i>
<i>Taṇṭ Aṭikal</i>	---	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee	In spite of his blindness, excavated the temple tank with the aid of a guide rope
<i>Mūrkkar</i>	<i>Vēḷāḷar</i>	<i>Toṇṭai</i>	Male	Service to Lord's devotees-Mild-devotee	Gambler who fed the devotees with what he won from gambling
<i>Cōmāci Māraṇ</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Divine Grace – Mild-devotee	Friend and devotee of <i>Cuntarar</i>
<i>Cākkiyar</i>	<i>Vēḷāḷar</i>	---	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee	Received the grace to come before the Lord
<i>Cīrappuli</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee	Generous host who showed hospitality to devotees of the Lord
<i>Cīruttoṇṭar</i>	<i>Māmāttirar</i> caste-Protect lives of all creatures	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to Lord's devotees-Harsh-devotee	Cut up his young son and cooked him for the devotee of the Lord
<i>Kaḷarirraṇivār</i>	Kingly	<i>Malai Natu</i>	Male	Service to Lord's devotees-	Friend of <i>Cuntarar</i> and

				Mild-devotee	attained eternal bliss with him
<i>Gaṇanātar</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	---	Male	Divine Grace – Mild-devotee	Appointed to succeed the leadership of Śiva's heavenly host
<i>Kūrruvaṇār</i>	Chieftain	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to Lord's devotees- Mild-devotee	Eradicating all wrong doings in his kingdom
<i>Pukaḷccōḷār</i>	Kingly	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to Lord's devotees- Mild-devotee	Joyfully entered the Column of flames
<i>Narasiṅga Muṇaiyaraiyar</i>	Chieftain	<i>Muṇaippāṭi</i>	Male	Service to Lord's devotees- Mild-devotee	Welcomed even shameless debauchery
<i>Atipattar</i>	Fisher folk	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to Śiva-linga and feet of the Lord- Mild-devotee	Gifted the golden fish to the Lord even in dire poverty
<i>Kalikkampar</i>	Merchant	<i>Peṇṇākaṭam</i>	Male	Service to Lord's devotees- Mild-devotee	Welcomed even his unfaithful servant
<i>Kaliyar</i>	Oil Vendors	<i>Toṇṭai</i>	Male	Service to Śiva-linga and feet of the Lord- Harsh-devotee	By cutting his own throat, he tried to light the lamp with his own blood
<i>Catti</i>	<i>Vēḷālar</i>	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to Śiva-linga and feet of the Lord- Harsh-devotee	Would cut off anyone's tongue who spoke ill of the devotees of the Lord
<i>Aiyaṭikaḷ Kāṭavar Kon</i>	Kingly	<i>Pallva</i>	Male	Service to Śiva-linga and feet of the Lord- Mild-devotee	Gave up his position as king to make pilgrimage to temples.
<i>Kaṇampullar</i>	Local headman	---	Male	Service to Śiva-linga and feet of the Lord- Mild-devotee	Set fire to the hair of his own head to serve as a lamp
<i>Kāri</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to Śiva-linga and feet of the Lord-	Built many shrines for Śiva

				Mild-devotee	
<i>Niṇṇa Sīr Neṭu Māraṇ</i>	Kingly	<i>Pāṇṭya</i>	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee	Established the way of <i>Śiva</i> as a true path to follow
<i>Vāyilar Nāyaṇār</i>	Sudra Caste	<i>Toṇṭai</i>	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee	Unwearyingly worshipped the Lord in the temple of his heart.
<i>Muṇaiyaṭuvār</i>	<i>Vēḷālar</i>	<i>Toṇṭai</i>	Male	Service to Lord's devotees-Mild-devotee	Distributed all the spoils that he won from battle.
<i>Kaḷarsinger</i>	Chieftain	---	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord-Harsh-devotee	Cut off his wife hand for taking the flowers that were offered to the Lord
<i>Itaṅkaḷiyār</i>	Kingly	<i>Kōṇāṭu</i>	Male	Service to Lord's devotees-Mild-devotee	Was kind to those who stole paddy to be distributed among devotees
<i>Ceruttuṇai</i>	<i>Vēḷālar</i>	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord-Harsh-devotee	Cut off the queen's nose for smelling the flowers that were offered to the Lord
<i>Pukaḷttuṇai</i>	Śaivite Brahmin	---	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee	Lord gave money to him to offer worship at the temple
<i>Kōṭṭipuli Nāyaṇār</i>	<i>Vēḷālar</i>	<i>Cōḷa</i>	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee	Tried to kill those who ate the food that was kept for offertory at the temple
<i>Pūcalār Nāyaṇār</i>	Brahmin	<i>Toṇṭai</i>	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee	Build temple for the Lord in his mind
<i>Maṅkaiyarkkaraci Ammaiṇār</i>	Kingly	<i>Pāṇṭya</i>	Female	Divine Grace – Mild-devotee	Established <i>Śaivism</i> in <i>Pāṇṭya</i> territory
<i>Nēcar</i>	Weaver Caste	---	Male	Service to Lord's devotees-	Distributed clothes to the

				Mild-devotee	devotees of the Lord
<i>Kōccenkaṭ Cōlar</i>	Kingly	<i>Cōla</i>	Male	Service to <i>Śiva-līṅga</i> and feet of the Lord- Mild-devotee	Spider that became king and built many temples
<i>Tirunīlakaṇṭar</i> <i>Yālppāṇar</i>	Pāṇar – musician	<i>Erukkattam</i> <i>Puliyūr</i>	Male	Divine Grace – Mild-devotee	Played music with <i>Campantar</i>
<i>Caṭaiyaṇār</i>	Śaivite Brahmin	---	Male	By giving Birth to <i>Cuntarar</i>	Father of <i>Cuntarar</i>
<i>Icaiñāṇi Ammaiṇār</i>	Śaivite Brahmin	---	Female	By giving Birth to <i>Cuntarar</i>	Mother of <i>Cuntarar</i>

APPENDIX II

Tirut Toṇṭar Tokai - 'The Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord' (Tēv. VII. 39)

திருத்தொண்டத்தொகை (தேவா. VII. 39).

தில்லைவாழ் அந்தணர்தம் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
திருநீல கண்டத்துக் குயவனார்க் கடியேன்
இல்லையே என்னாத இயற்பகைக்கும் அடியேன்
இளையான்றன் குடிமாறன் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
வெல்லுமா மிகவல்ல மெய்ப்பொருளுக் கடியேன்
விரிபொழிசூழ் குன்றையார் விறன்மிண்டற் கடியேன்
அல்லிமென் முல்லையந்தார் அமர்ந்திக் கடியேன்
ஆரூரன் ஆரூரில் அம்மானுக் காளே.

(1)

To all who serve the Brahmins of *Tillai*, I am the servant,
To the potter, *Nilakaṇṭan*, I am the servant.
To *Iyaṇpakai* who gave without limit, I am the servant.
To the servitors of *Māraṇ* of *Iḷaiyāṇkuṭi*, I am the servant.
To the indomitable *Meyporuḷ*, I am the servant.
To *Viṇṇamiṇṭaṇ* from *Kunṇrai* of spacious groves, I am the servant.
To the worshipful *Amarnīti*, I am the servant.
I am the poet *Ārūraṇ*, slave of the God of *Ārūr*.

இலைமலிந்த வேல்நம்பி எறிபத்தற் கடியேன்
ஏனாதி நாதன்றன் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
கலைமலிந்த சீர்நம்பி கண்ணப்பற் கடியேன்
கடவுரற் கலயன்றன் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
மலைமலிந்த தோள்வள்ளல் மானக்கஞ் சாறன்
எஞ்சாத வாட்டாயன் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
அலைமலிந்த புனல்மங்கை ஆனாயற் கடியேன்
ஆரூரன் ஆரூரில் அம்மானுக் காளே.

(2)

To the prince *Eṇipattaṇ* with the sharp spear, I am the servant.
To the servitors of *Ēṇāti*, I am the servant.
To the lover of the Lord, *Kaṇṇappaṇ*, famed for his knowledge, I am the servant.
To the servitors of *Kalayaṇ* of *Kaṭavūr*, I am the servant.
To the magnanimous and valiant *Māṇakkañcāraṇ* with shoulders like hills, and the
servitors of *Tāyaṇ* of the complete scythe, I am the servant.
To the shepherd *Āṇāyaṇ* of *Maṅkai*, I am the servant.
I am the poet *Ārūraṇ*, slave of the God of *Ārūr*.

மும்மையால் உலகாண்ட மூரத்திக்கு மடியேன்
முருகனுக்கும் உருத்திர பசுபதிக்கும் அடியேன்
செம்மையே திருநாளைப் போவாற்கும் அடியேன்
திருக்குறப்புத் தொண்டர்தம் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்

மெய்ம்மையே திருமேனி வழிபடா நிற்க
வெகுண்டெழுந்த தாதைதான் மழுவினால் எறிந்த
அம்மையான் அடிச்சண்டிப் பெருமானுக் கடியேன்
ஆரூன் ஆரூரில் அம்மானுக் காளே.

(3)

To *Mūrtti* who reigned over the world through the three emblems of Lord, I am servant.
To *Murukaṇ* and *Uruttira Pacupati*, I am the servant.
To the holy pilgrim of high rectitude *Trunāḷaippōvār*, I am the servant.
To the servants of *Tirukurippuṭ Toṇṭar*, I am the servant.
To *Caṇṭi*, devotee of the Lord who gives us release, the young man who cut off with an axe the foot of his own father when he disrupted the child's sincere worship of the Lord's image, I am the servant.
I am the poet *Ārūraṇ*, slave of the God of *Ārūr*.

திருநின்ற செம்மையே செம்மையாக் கொண்ட
திருநாவுக் கரையன்றன் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
பெருநம்பி குலச்சிறைதன் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
பெருமிழலைக் குறும்பார்க்கும் பேயார்க்கும் அடியேன்
ஒருநம்பி அப்பூதி அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
ஒலிபுனல்கூழ் சாத்தமங்கை நீலநக்கர்க் கடியேன்
அருநம்பி நமிநந்தி அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
ஆரூன் ஆரூரில் அம்மானுக் காளே.

(4)

To the servitor of *Nāvukaracaṇ*, 'Lord of Speech,' who too for his glory nothing other than the Lord's name in which all blessing bide, I am the servant.
To the servitors of the noble *Kulacciṇrai*, I am the servant.
To *Perumilalaik Kurumpaṇ* and the revered *Pēy*, I am the servant.
To the servitors of princely *Appūti*, I am the servant.
To *Nīlanakkaṇ* from *Cāttamaṅkai* by sounding river, I am servant.
To the servitors of noble *Naminanti*, I am the servant.
I am the poet *Ārūraṇ*, slave of the God of *Ārūr*.

வம்பறா வரிவண்டு மணம்நாற மலரும்
மதுமலர்நற் கொன்றையான் அடியலாற் பேணா
எம்பிரான் சம்பந்தன் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
ஏயர்கோன் கலிக்காமன் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
நம்பிரான் திருமூலன் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
நாட்டமிகு தண்டிக்கும் முர்க்கார்க்கும் அடியேன்
அம்பரான் சோமாசி மாறனுக்கும் அடியேன்
ஆரூன் ஆரூரில் அம்மானுக் காளே.

(5)

To the servitors of the godly *Campantaṇ* who worships nothing but the feet of the Lord who wears in his hair fragrant flowers swarming with humming bees and the good *koṇṇrai*'s honey-filled blossom, I am the servant.
To the servitors of *Kalikkāmaṇ*, prince of the *Ēyars*, I am the servant.
To the servitors of our master *Tirumūlaṇ*, I am the servant.
To *Taṇṭi* who was blessed with vision, and of *Mūrkkāṇ*, I am the servant.

To *Cōmāci Māraṇ* of *Ampar*, I am the servant.
I am the poet *Ārūraṇ*, slave of the God of *Ārūr*.

வார்கொண்ட வனமுலையாள் உமைபங்கள் கழலே
மறவாது கல்லெறிந்த சாக்கியாக்கும் அடியேன்
சீர்கொண்ட புகழ்வள்ளல் சிறப்புலிக்கும் அடியேன்
செங்காட்டங் குடிமேய சிறுத்தொண்டர்க் கடியேன்
கார்கொண்ட கொடைக்கழறிற் றறிவார்க்கும் அடியேன்
கடற்காழிக் கணநாதன் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
ஆர்கொண்ட வேற்கூற்றன் களந்தைக்கோன் அடியேன்
ஆருரன் ஆருரில் அம்மானுக் காளே.

(6)

To *Cākkiyaṇ* who devoutly threw stones at the feet of the Lord who shares his body with
Umā, whose lovely breasts are bound with the breast cloth, I am the servant.
To the generous and illustrious *Cirapuli* of good fame, I am servant.
To *Ciruttonṭaṇ* of *Cenkāṭṭaṇkuṭi*, I am servant.
To *Kaḷarirraṇivāṇ*, generous as a showing cloud, I am the servant.
To the servitors *Kaṇanātaṇ* of *Kāli*-one-the-sea, I am the servant.
To *Kūruraṇ* of the victorious spear, prince of *Kaḷantai*, I am the servant.
I am the poet *Ārūraṇ*, slave of the God of *Ārūr*.

பொய்யடிமை யில்லாத புலவர்க்கும் அடியேன்
பொழிற்கருவூர்த் துஞ்சிய புகழ்ச்சோழற் கடியேன்
மெய்யடியான் நரசிங்க முனையரையற் கடியேன்
விரிதிரைகூழ் கடல்நாகை அதிபத்தற் கடியேன்
கைதடிந்த வரிசிலையான் கலிக்கம்பன் கலியன்
கழற்சத்தி வரிஞுவையர்கோன் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
ஐயடிகள் காடவர்கோன் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
ஆருரன் ஆருரில் அம்மானுக் காளே.

(7)

To the poets who shun crooked patrons, I am the servant.
To king *Pukaḷ Cōlaṇ* who slain in battle at fertile *Karuvūr* field, I am the servant.
To the true devotee, *Naraciṅka Muṇaiyaraiaṇ*, I am the servant.
To *Atipattaṇ* of wave-washed *Nāka*-on-the sea, I am the servant.
To the servants of *Kalikkampaṇ* of the drawn bow, who cut off enemies' arms,
To *Kaliyaṇ*, and of *Catti*, the *Varinṇcaiyar* chief with the hero's anklet, I am the servant.
To the servitors of *Aiyaṭikaḷ*, king of the *Kātavas*, I am the servant.
I am the poet *Ārūraṇ*, slave of the God of *Ārūr*.

கறைக்கண்டன் கழலடியே காப்புக்கொண் டிருந்த
கணம்புல்ல நம்பிக்கும் காரிக்கும் அடியேன்
நிறைக்கொண்ட சிந்தையபன் நெல்வேலி வென்ற
நின்றசீர் நெடுமாறன் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
துறைக்கொண்ட செம்பவளம் இருளகற்றுஞ் சோதித்
தொன்மயிலை வாயிலான் அடியோர்க்கும் அடியேன்
அறைக்கொண்ட வேல்நம்பி முனையடுவாற் கடியேன்
ஆருரன் ஆருரில் அம்மானுக் காளே.

(8)

To *Kaṇampullaṇ* who worshipped the feet of the Lord with the poison-stained throat as his only shield, and of *Kāri*, I am the servant.
 To the servitors of ‘upright’ *Neṭumāraṇ* who won the battle of *Nelvēli*, king who has mastered his mind and senses, I am the servant.
 To the servitors of *Vāyilāṇ* of ancient *Mayilai*, where the red coral washed ashore by the sea brightens the sky, I am the servant.
 To Prince *Muṇaiyaṭuvāṇ* of the spear of war, I am the servant.
 I am the poet *Ārūraṇ*, slave of the God of *Ārūr*.

கடல்கூழ்ந்த உலகெலாங் காக்கின்ற பெருமான்
 காடவர்கோன் கழற்சிங்கன் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
 மடல்கூழ்ந்த தார்நம்பி இடங்கழிக்கும் தஞ்சை
 மன்னவனாஞ் செருத்துணைதன் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
 புடைகூழ்ந்த புலியதன்மேல் அரவாட ஆடி
 பொன்னடிக்கே மனம்வைத்த புகழ்த்துணைக்கும் அடியேன்
 அடலகூழ்ந்த வேல் நம்பி கோட்புலிக்கும் அடியேன்
 ஆருரன் ஆருரில் அம்மானுக் காளே. (9)

To the servitors of *Kaḷarciṇkan*, *Kāṭava* king, sovereign protector of sea-grit earth, I am the servant.
 To prince *Iṭaṇkaḷi* with the flower garland, and of the servitors of *Ceruttuṇai*, King of *Taṇcai*, I am the servant.
 To *Pukaḷttuṇai* who mediated only on the golden feet of the dancer who dances, making the snakes dance on the tiger skin band at his waist, I am the servant.
 To lordly *Kōṭpuli* of the victorious spear, I am the servant.
 I am the poet *Ārūraṇ*, slave of the God of *Ārūr*.

பத்தராய்ப் பணிவார்கள் எல்லார்க்கும் அடியேன்
 பரமனையே பாடுவார் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
 சித்தத்தைச் சிவன்பாலே வைத்தார்க்கும் அடியேன்
 திருவாரூர்ப் பிறந்தார்கள் எல்லார்க்கும் அடியேன்
 முப்போதுந் திருமேனி தீண்டுவார்க் கடியேன்
 முழுநீறு பூசிய முனிவர்க்கும் அடியேன்
 அப்பாலும் அடிச்சார்ந்தார் அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்
 ஆருரன் ஆருரில் அம்மானுக் காளே. (10)

To all who worship *Śiva* as his devotees, I am the servant.
 To those who sing only of the Lord, I am the servant.
 To every man who mediates on *Śiva*, I am the servant.
 To all who are born in holy *Ārūr*, I am the servant.
 To men who thrice daily touch the Lord’s holy image, I am the servant.
 To sages who wear the sacred ash, I am the servant.
 To all who seek the Lord’s feet everywhere, I am the servant.
 I am the poet *Ārūraṇ*, slave of the God of *Ārūr*.

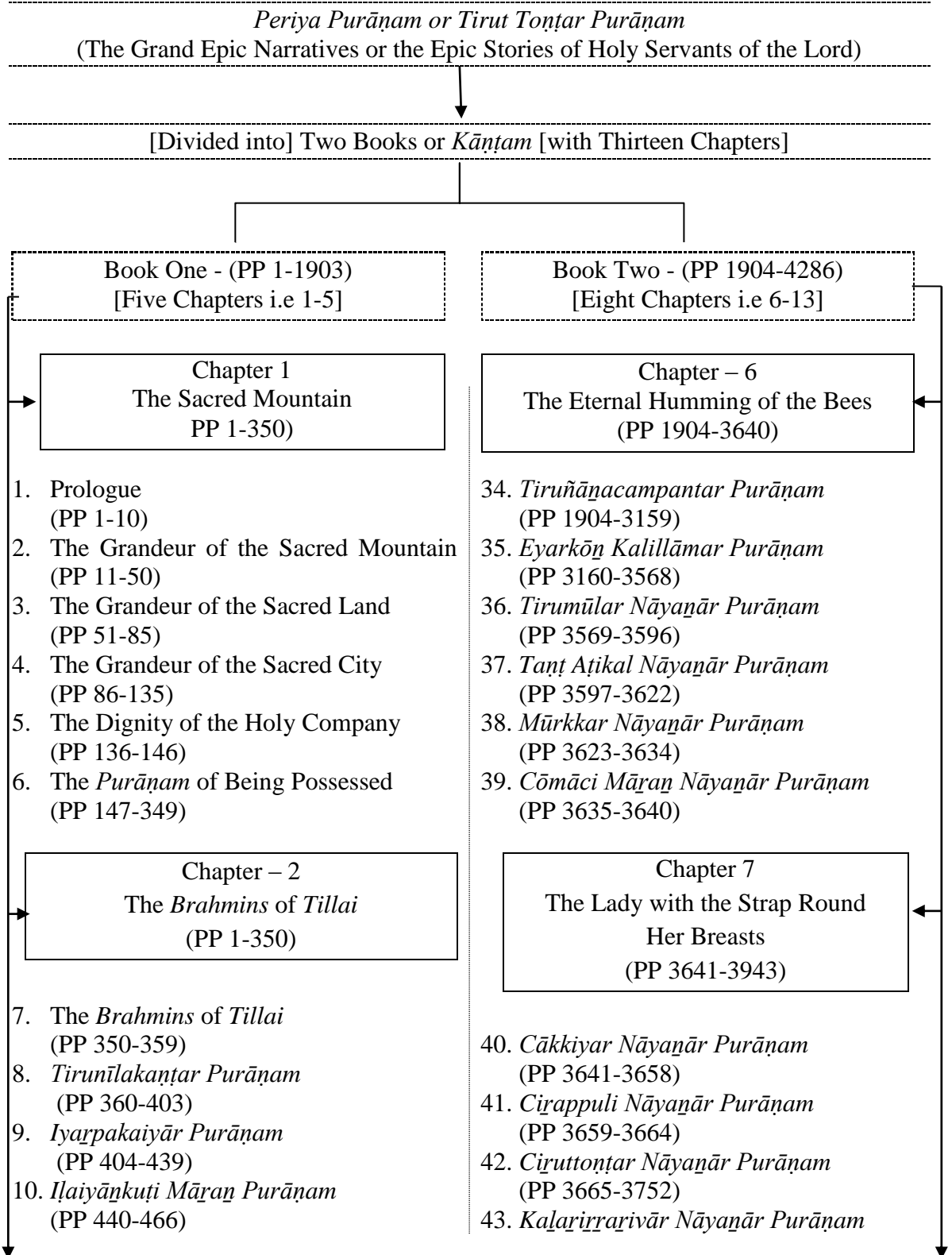
மன்னியசீர் மறைநாவன் நின்றவூர்ப் பூசல்
வரிவளையாள் மானிக்கும் நேசனுக்கும் அடியேன்
தென்னவனாய் உலகொண்ட செங்கணாற் கடியேன்
திருநீல கண்டத்துப் பாணனார்க் கடியேன்
என்னவனாம் அரனடியே அடைந்திட்ட சடையன்
இசைஞானி காதலன் திருநாவ லுார்க்கோன்
அன்னவனாம் ஆருரன் அடிமைகேட் டுவப்பார்
ஆருரன் ஆருரில் அம்மானுக் காளே.

(11)

To renowned Pūcal of Niṇṇavūr, Brahmin who chanted the sacred Veda,
To the noble queen with the beautiful bracelets, and of *Nēcan*, I am the servant.
To *Cenkan* who ruled the world as King of the South, I am the servant.
To the *Pāṇan* musician *Tirunīlakantaṇ*, I am the servant.
Those who delight in the song of devotion sung by *Ārūraṇ*, prince of holy *Nāvalūr*, who
loves *Icaināṇi* and *Caṭaiyaṇ*, true devotees of my Lord *Araṇ*'s feet, will become lovers of
our Father in *Ārūr*.

APPENDIX III

THE STRUCTURE OF THE *PERIYA PURĀṆAM*



11. *Meypporuḷ Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 467-490)
12. *Viṇamīṇṭar Purāṇam*
(PP 491-501)
13. *Amarnīti Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 502- 549)

Chapter – 3
The Wielder of the Spear
(PP 550-972)

14. *Eṇipattar Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 550-607)
15. *Eṇātinātaṇ Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 608-649)
16. *Kaṇṇappar Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 650-835)
17. *Kuṇkuliyaḱ Kulayar Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 836- 870)
18. *Māṇakkañcāraṇ Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 871-907)
19. *Arivāṭṭāyar Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 908-930)
20. *Āṇāyar Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 931-972)

Chapter – 4
The Three-fold Methods by which He
Ruled the World
(PP 973-1270)

21. *Mūrtti Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 973-1021)
22. *Murukar Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 1022-1035)
23. *Rudra Pacupatiyār Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 1036- 1045)
24. *Tirunāḷaippōvār Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 1046-1083)
25. *Tirukurippuṭ Tonṭar Purāṇam*
(PP 1083-1210)
26. *Caṇṭēcurar Purāṇam*
(PP 1211-1270)

(PP 3753-3927)

44. *Gaṇanātar Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 3928-3934)
45. *Kūrṟuvaṇār Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 3935-3943)

Chapter – 8
The Poets Free of Hypocrisy
(PP 3944-4059)

46. The Poets free of Hypocrisy
(PP 3944-3946)
47. *Pukaḷccōḷār Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 3947-3987)
48. *Narasinga Muṇaiyaraiyar Purāṇam*
(PP 3988-3996)
49. *Atipattar Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 3997-4016)
50. *Kalikkampar Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 4017- 4026)
51. *Kaliyar Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 4027-4043)
52. *Catti Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 4044-4050)
53. *Aiyaṭikḷ Kāṭavar Kon Purāṇam*
(PP 4051-4059)

Chapter – 9
The Dark-Throated Lord
(PP 4060-4100)

54. *Kaṇampullar Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 4060-4068)
55. *Kāri Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 4069-4073)
56. *Ninra Sīr Neṭu Māraṇ Purāṇam*
(PP 4074-4083)
57. *Vāyilar Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 4084-4093)
58. *Muṇaiyaṭuvār Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 4094-4100)

<p>Chapter – 5</p> <p>The Fountain of Every Blessing (PP 1271-1903)</p> <p>27. <i>Tirunāvukkaracar Nāyaṇār Purāṇam</i> (PP 1271-1699)</p> <p>28. <i>Kulacciraiyār Nāyaṇār Purāṇam</i> (PP 1700-1710)</p> <p>29. <i>Perumilalaik Kuṟumper Purāṇam</i> (PP 1711-1721)</p> <p>30. <i>Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār Purāṇam</i> (PP 1722-1787)</p> <p>31. <i>Appūti Aṭikal Nāyaṇār Purāṇam</i> (PP 1788-1833)</p> <p>32. <i>Tirunīlanakkar Nāyaṇār Purāṇam</i> (PP 1834-1870)</p> <p>33. <i>Naminanti Aṭikaḷ Nāyaṇār Purāṇam</i> (PP 1871-1903)</p>	<p>Chapter – 10</p> <p>The Protector of the Sea-Girt Earth (PP 4101-4151)</p> <p>59. <i>Kaḷarsinger Nāyaṇār Purāṇam</i> (PP 4101-4113)</p> <p>60. <i>Iṭaṅkaḷiyār Nāyaṇār Purāṇam</i> (PP 4114-4124)</p> <p>61. <i>Ceruttuṇai Nāyaṇār Purāṇam</i> (PP 4125-4131)</p> <p>62. <i>Pukaḷttuṇai Nāyaṇār Purāṇam</i> (PP 4132-4138)</p> <p>63. <i>Kōṭpuli Nāyaṇār Purāṇam</i> (PP 4139-4151)</p> <p>Chapter – 11</p> <p>True Devotion (PP 4152-4175)</p> <p>64. Those who have true devotion (PP 4152-4159)</p> <p>65. Those who sing in praise of the Lord (PP 4160-4161)</p> <p>66. Those who have placed their hearts on <i>Śiva</i> (PP 4162)</p> <p>67. Those who are born at <i>Tiruvārūr</i> (PP 4163-4164)</p> <p>68. Those who attend to the Lord three times a day (PP 4165-4167)</p> <p>69. Those who wear the Holy ash (PP 4168-4173)</p> <p>70. Those who are from far and wide (PP 4174-4175)</p> <p>Chapter – 12</p> <p>The Scripture of Endless Glory (PP 4176-4233)</p> <p>71. <i>Pūcalār Nāyaṇār Purāṇam</i></p>
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(PP 4176-4193)

72. *Maṅkaiyarkkaraci Ammaiṃyār*
(PP 4194-4196)

73. *Nēcar Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 4197-4201)

74. *Kōcceṇkaṭ Cōḷar Purāṇam*
(PP 4202- 4219)

75. *Tirunīlakaṇṭar Yālppāṇar Purāṇam*
(PP 4220-4231)

76. *Caṭaiyaṇār Nāyaṇār Purāṇam*
(PP 4232)

77. *Icaināṇi Ammaiṃyār Purāṇam*
(PP 4233)

Chapter – 13
The White Elephant
(PP 4234-4286)

78. The White Elephant
(PP 4234-4286)

APPENDIX IV

Tirupasuram (திருப்பாசுரம்) (Tēv. 3.054)

The only *patikam* (பதிகம்) i.e. poem in praise of a deity consisting generally of ten stanzas for which which *Cēkkiḷār* has given full commentary in the *Periya Purāṇam* is *Tirupasuram* of *Campanar*. The song and the commentary as follows:

Tirupasuram:

வாழ்க அந்தணர் வானவர ஆனினம்
வீழ்க தண்புனல் வேந்தனும் ஓங்குக
ஆழ்க தீயதெல் லாம்அரன் நாமமே
கூழ்க வையக முந்துயர் தீர்கவே (1)

ஆரிய காட்சிய ராய்த்தம தங்கைசேர்
எரியர் ஏறுகந் தேறுவர் கண்டமுங்
கரியர் காடுறை வாழ்க்கைய ராயினும்
பெரிய ராரறி வாரவர் பெற்றியே (2)

வெந்த சாம்பல் விரையெனப் பூசியே
தந்தை யாரொடு தாயிலர் தம்மையே
சிந்தி யாளழு வார்வினை தீர்ப்பரால்
எந்தை யாரவர் எவ்வகை யார்கொலோ (3)

ஆட்பா லவரக் கருளும் வண்ணமும் ஆதிமாண்புங்
கேட்பான் புகில்அள வில்லை கிளக்க வேண்டா
கோட்பா வனவும் வினையுங் குறுகாமை யெந்தை
தாட்பால் வணங்கித் தலைநின் றிவைகேட்க தக்கார் (4)

ஏதுக்க ளாலும் எடுத்த மொழியாலும் மிக்குச்
சோதிக்க வேண்டா சுடர்விட் டுளன் எங்கள்சோதி
மாதுக்கம் நீங்க லுறுவீர் மனம்பற்றி வாழ்மின்
சாதுக்கள் மிக்கீர் இறையே வந்து சார்மின்களே (5)

ஆடும் மெனவும் அருங்கூற்றம் உதைத்து வேதம்
பாடும் மெனவும் புகழல்லது பாவம் நீங்கக்
கேடும் பிறப்பும் அறுக்கும் மெனக்கேட்ட ராகில்
நாடுந் திறத்தார்க் கருளல்லது நாட்ட லாமே (6)

கடிசேர்ந்த போது மலரான கைக்கொண்டு நல்ல
படிசேர்ந்த பால்கொண்டங் காட்டியத் தாதை பண்டு
முடிசேர்ந்த காலையற வெட்டிட முக்கண் மூர்த்தி
அடிசேர்ந்த வண்ணம் அறிவார் சொலக்கேட்டு மன்றே (7)

வேத முதல்வன் முதலாக விளங்கி வையம்
ஏதப் படாமை யுலகத்தவர் ஏத்தல் செய்யப்
பூத முதல்வன் முதலே முதலாப் பொலிந்த

சூதன் ஒலிமாலை யென்றே கலிக்கோவை சொல்லே (8)

பாராழி வட்டம் பகையால் நலிந்தாட்ட ஆடிப்
பேராழி யானதிடர் கண்டருள் செய்தல் பேணி
நீராழி விட்டேறி நெஞ்சிடங் கொண்ட வர்க்குப்
போராழி யீந்த புகழும் புகழுற்ற தன்றே (9)

மாலா யவனும் மறைவல்ல நான் முகனும்
பாலாய தேவர்பக ரில்லமு தூட்டல் பேனிக்
குாலாய முந்நீர் கடைந்தார்க் கரிதா யெழுந்த
ஆலாலம் உண்டங்கம ரர்க்கருள் செய்த தாமே (10)

அற்றன்றி அந்தண் மதுரைத் தொகை யாக்கினானுந்
தெற்றென்று தெய்வந் தெளியார் கரைக்கோலை தெண்ணீர்ப்
பற்றின்றிப் பாங்கெதிர் வினூரவும் பண்பு நோக்கில்
பெற்றொன் றுயர்த்த பெருமான் பெருமானு மன்றே (11)

Cēkkilār's commentary on Tirupasuram:

(a) வாழ்க அந்தணர் வானவர ஆனினம்:

அந்தணர் தேவர்ஆன் இனங்கள் வாழ்க என்று இந்தமெய்ம் மொழிப்பயன் உலகம்
இன்புறச் சந்தவேள்விகள் முதல் சங்கரார்க்கு முன் வந்த அர்ச்சனை வழிபாடு மன்னவாம்
(பெ.பு. 2724).

“May Brahmins, gods and cows all prosper” – by virtue of this petition, all sacrifice,
rituals and worship would be offered to the Lord with due order and regularity, for the
well-being of the world (PP. 2724).

(b) வீழ்க தண்புனல் வேந்தனும் ஓங்குக:

வேள்வி நல்பயன் வீழ்புனல் ஆவது நாளும் அர்ச்சனை நல்உறுப்பு ஆதலால் ஆளும்
மன்னனை வாழ்த்தியது அர்ச்சனை மூளும்மற்று இவை காக்கும் முறைமையால் (பெ.பு.
2725)

“May cool rain fall” – rain is the fruit of sacrifice, and it is also a major focus in the daily
rituals. “May the king flourish” – the good fortune of the king depends on his
safeguarding worship and the like (PP. 2725).

(c) ஆழ்க தீயதெல் லாம்அரன் நாமமே:

ஆழ்க தீயது என்று ஒதிற்று அயல்நெறி வீழ்க என்றது வேறு எல்லாம் அரன்பெயர் சூழ்க
என்றது தொல்உயிர் யாவையும் வாழி அஞ்செழுத்து ஒதி வளர்கவே (பெ.பு. 2726)

“May evil disappear” – this is the same as saying “may other religions fail”. “May the
name of Haran encompass all things” – this means “may the use of the Five-Letter-Prayer
extend more and more widely, for the benefit of eternal souls (PP. 2726).

(d) வையக முந்துயர் தீர்கவே:

சென்ன வையகமும் துயர்தீர்கவே என்னும் நீர்மை இகபரத்தில் துயர் மன்னிவாழ் உலகத்தவர் மாற்றிட முன்னர் ஞானசம்பந்தர் மொழிந்தனர் (பெ.பு. 2727).

“May the world be rid of trouble” – with these words, *Ñāṇa Campantar* blessed the people of the world, and freed them from trouble in this world and the next (PP. 2727).

(e) ஆரிய காட்சிய:

ஆரிய காட்சியர் என்பது அவ் ஆதியைத் தெரியலாம் நிலையால் தெரியார் என உரிய அன்பினில் காண்பவர்க்கு உண்மையாம் பெரியநல் அடையாளங்கள் பேசினார் (பெ.பு. 2728)

“He is hard to see” – the primal Lord cannot be seen because he is beyond the reach of human vision. But to those who seek him with true love, he grants the vision of himself by means of those great and lasting symbols which *Campantar* lists, viz. his bull, his dark throat, his dwelling in the burning ghat, the fire in his hand, etc. (PP. 2728).

(f) ராயினும் பெரிய ராரறி:

ஆயினும் பெரியர் ஆவர் என்பது மேயஇவ் இயல்பே அன்றி விண்முதல் பாய பூதங்கள் பல்உயிர் அண்டங்கள் ஏயும் யாவும் இவர்வடிவு என்ந்தாம் (பெ.பு. 2729).

“Yet he is great” – apart from those symbols, the universe, the five elements, the heavenly bodies and untold myriad souls constitute his visible form (PP. 2729).

(g) ராரறி வாரவர் பெற்றியே:

பின்பும் ஆர்அறிவார் அவர் பெற்றியே என்பதுயார் உணர்வானும் சென்று எட்ட ஓணா மன்பெருந் தன்மையார் என வாழ்த்தினார் அன்பு சூழ்சண்பை ஆண்டகை யார்அவர் (பெ.பு. 2730).

“Who can know what he is like” – here the great devotee *Canpai* declares that *Śiva*’s eternal nature is limitless, beyond the reach of human knowledge (PP. 2730).

(h) வெந்த சாம்பல் விரையெனப் பூசியே:

வெந்த சாம்பல் விரைஎன்பது தமது அந்தம் இல்லுளி அல்லாஒளி எலாம் வந்து வெந்து அறமற்று அப்பொடிஅணி சந்தமாக் கொண்ட வண்ணமும் சாற்றினார் (பெ.பு. 2731)

“The fragrance of burnt ash” – apart from his eternal light, all other lights are in the end reduced to ashes. But, *Campantar* affirms, *Śiva* wears this particular ash for its beauty as an ornament, like sandalwood paste (PP. 2731).

(i) தந்தை யாரொடு தாயிலர்:

தமக்குத் தந்தையர் தாய்இலர் என்பதும் அமைத்து இங்கு யாவையும் ஆங்கு அவை வீந்தபோது இமைத்தசோதி அடக்கிப்பின் ஈதலால் எமக்கு நாதர் பிறப்பிலார் என்றதாம் (பெ.பு. 2732).

“He has no father or mother” – this means he creates all things in the world. Then when they pass away, he reabsorbs them in a moment of time, before bringing them to both once more. But our Lord himself is not subject to repeated births (PP. 2732).

(j) தம்மையே சிந்தி யாளழு வார்வினை தீர்ப்பரால்:

தம்மையே சிந்தியா எனும் தன்மைதான் மெய்ம்மை ஆகிவிளங்கு ஒளிதாம் என இம்மையே நினைவார்தம் இருவினைப் பொய்மைவல் இருள் போக்குவர் என்றதாம் (பெ.பு. 2733).

“By meditating on him alone” – for those in their present birth meditate on him as the one true, shining light, he dispels the darkness of falsehood and of actions, good and bad (PP. 2733).

(k) எந்தை யாரவர் எவ்வகை யார்கொலோ:

எந்தையார் அவர்எவ்வகை யார்கொல் என்று இந்த வாய்மை மற்று எப்பொருள் கூற்றினும் முந்தையோரை எக்கூற்றின் மொழிவது என்று அம்தண் பூந்தராய் வேந்தர் அருளினார் (பெ.பு. 2734).

“What is our father really like?” – here the prince of *Pūntarāy* affirms truth that in whatever terms he may be described, he is the primal Lord and all descriptions are therefore true of him (PP. 2734).

(l) ஆட்பா லவரக் கருளும் வண்ணமும்:

ஆதி ஆள்பால் அவர்க்கு அருளும்திறம் நாதன் மாட்சிமை கேட்க நவிலுங்கால் ஓதும் எல்லை உவப்பு இலஆதலின் யாதும் ஆராய்ச்சி இல்லையாம் என்றதாம் (பெ.பு. 2735).

“The Primal Lord bestows his grace on those whom he has made his own” – on enquiry, the glory of the Lord proves to be without end or limit. Therefore no purpose is served by investigation (PP. 2735).

(m) கோட்பா வனவும் வினையுங் குறுகாமை:

அன்ன ஆதலில் ஆதியார்தான் அடைந்து இன்னகேட்கவே ஏற்றகோள் பாலவும் முன்னை வல்வினையும் முடிவு எய்தும் அத் தன்மையார்க்கு என்றனர் சண்பை காவலர் (பெ.பு. 2736).

“The influence of the planets” – since his grace is such, the guardian of *Canpai* teaches that devotees should seek the feet of the primal Lord and listen to his voice. From them

the influence of the planets and the legacy of previous deeds will then be brought to an end. (PP. 2736)

(n) ஏதுக்க ளாலும் எடுத்த மொழியாலும்:

மன்னும் ஏதுக்களால் எனும் வாய்மைதான் தன்னது ஒப்புவேறு இன்மையில் சங்கரன் இன்ன தன்மையை ஏது எடுத்துக்காட்டு அன்னவற்றால் அளப்பிலன் என்றதாம் (பெ.பு. 2737).

“By Logic” – there is nothing else like him, so the character of *Sankaran* cannot be measured by logic or analogy (PP. 2737).

(o) சுடர்விட் டுளன் எங்கள்சோதி:

தோன்று காட்சி சுடர் விட்டுள்ள என்பது ஆன்ற அங்கிப் புறத்து ஒளியாய் அன்பில் ஊன்ற உள்ளமும் சோதியாய் நின்றனன் ஏன்று காண்பார்க்கு இதுபொருள் என்றதாம் (பெ.பு. 2738).

“He is radiant light” – to those who have eyes to see, this means that while his outward form is burning fire, he shines as the light within the hearts of those who love him (PP. 2738).

(p) மாதுக்கம் நீங்க லுறுவீர:

மாதுக்கம் நீங்கல் உறுவீர் மனம்பற்றும் என்பது ஆதிச்சுடர் சோதியை அன்பின் அகத்துள் ஆக்கிப் போதித்த நோக்கு உற்று ஒழியாமல் பொருந்தி வாழ்ந்து போதித்த பந்தப் பிறப்பின் நெறிபேர்மின் என்றாம் (பெ.பு. 2739).

“You who would be free from great suffering, with your mind lay hold of him” – in love enshrine within your heart the primal radiance, live with your attention focused on the teaching, and so escape from the bondage of separate existence and the road that leads to rebirth (PP. 2739).

(q) சாதுக்கள் மிக்கீர் இறையே வந்து சார்மின்களே:

ஈண்டு சாதுக்கள் என்று எடுத்து ஒதிற்று வேண்டும் வேட்கையை எல்லாம் விமலர்தாள் பூண்ட அன்பினில் போற்றுவீர் சார்மின் என்று ஆண்ட சண்பை அரசர் அருளினார் (பெ.பு. 2740).

“O you of great goodness, draw near to God” – by this the king of *Canpai* taught that the sotless Lord is beyond the taint of all desire, and that those should draw near to him who worship his feet in love (PP. 2740).

(r) ஆடும் மெனவும்

ஆடும் எனஆம் திருப்பாட்டின் அமைத்த மூன்றும் நீடும்புகழோ பிறர்துன்பம் நீத்தற்கோ என்று தேடும் உணர்வீர் உலகுக்கு இவை செய்தது ஈசர் கூடும் கருணைத்திறம் என்றனர் கொள்கை மேலார் (பெ.பு. 2741).

“He dances” – three actions are mentioned in this stanza, beginning with his dance. You want to know whether these are performed simply to win praise, or rather to free others from their pain? In the opinion of the noble child, God did these things for the sake of the world, and they reveal the working of his grace (PP. 2741).

(s) கடிசேர்ந்த போது:

கருதும் கடிசேர்ந்த எனும் திருப்பாட்டில் ஈசர் மருவும் பெரும்பூசை மறுத்தவர்க்கோறல் முத்தி தருத்தன்மையது ஆதல் சண்டிசர்தம் செய்கை தக்கோர் பெரிதும் சொல்கேட்டனம் என்றனர் பிள்ளையார்தாம் (பெ.பு. 2742).

“Fragrant flower” – in this stanza *Campanantar* affirms that tradition approves the deed of *Caṇṭicar*, and that killing one who disturbs the worship of the Lord confers deliverance (PP. 2742).

(t) வேத முதல்வன் முதலாக:

வேதமுதல்வன் எனும் மெய்த்திருப் பாட்டினில் நேர் ஆதிஉலகோர் இடர்நீங்கிட ஏத்த ஆடும் பாதமுதல் ஆம்பதினெண் புராணங்கள் என்றே ஓது என்று உரைசெய்தனர் ஓதாது உணர்ந்தார் (பெ.பு. 2743).

“The primal Lord of the Vedas” – he is the primal Lord, whose dancing feet dispel the troubles of the people of the world as they engage in praising him. That is the testimony of the eighteen Purāṇas. He who understood all things without benefit of study enjoined, “Chant those Purāṇas”. (PP. 2743).

(u) பாராழி வட்டம்:

பாஉற்ற பார்ஆழி வட்டத் திருப்பாட்டின் உண்மை காவல் தொழிலான் எனும் கண்ணனும் காவல் பெற்றது யாவர்க்கும் மேல்ஆய ஈசன் அருள் ஆழிபெற்று மேவுற்று சீர்உற்றுது என்றனர் வேதவாயர் (பெ.பு. 2744).

“The circle of the earth” – *Tirumal* was given the task of protecting the world, and with it the distinction of receiving the discus as a gift from the supreme God (PP. 2744).

(v) மாலா யவனும் மறைவல்ல நான் முகனும்:

மால்ஆயவன் என்ன வரும் திருப்பாட்டில் மாலும் தோலாமறை நான்முகனும் தொடர்வாம் அமரர் ஏலாவகை சுட்ட நஞ்சுஉண்டு இறவாமை காத்த மேலாம் கருணைத்திறம் வெங்குரு வேந்தர் வைத்தார் (பெ.பு. 2745).

“*Tirumāl*” – *Tirumāl*, *Ayaṇ* and their immortal followers were all severely scalded by the poison from the sea of milk. Here the prince of *Veṅkuru* demonstrates the matchless grace of *Śiva*, who drank the poison and thereby saved them all from death (PP. 2745).

(w) அற்றன்றி அந்தண்

ஆன அற்று அன்றி என்ற அத்திருப்பாடில் கூடல் மா நகரத்துச் சங்கம் வைத்தவன் தேற்றத்தேறா ஈனர்கள் எல்லைக்கு இட்ட ஏடுநீர் எதிர்ந்து செல்லில் ஞானம் ஈசன்பால் அன்பே என்றனர் ஞானம் உண்டார் (பெ.பு. 2746).

“Not only so...” – the *Pāṇṭya* king who fostered the growth of the Tamil *Caṅgam* in the city of *Maturai* attained clear understanding, but the *Jains* who cast their palm leaf into the river to resolve their dispute had no such clarity. *Campantar* in this stanza declares that if his palm leaf floats upstream against the current that will prove that true wisdom consists in loving God (PP. 2746).

APPENDIX V

GLOSSARY

Sanskrit terms have been identified by (S).

Ādhi Bhagavan
Āgama (S)

Lord; ‘The primal deity’
Sacred texts treating the methods of temple construction and creation of idols, worship means of deities, philosophical doctrines, meditative practices, attainment of six-fold desires and four kinds of yoga.

Akam

‘Interior,’ ‘the inner part’; the genre of love poetry in classical (Caṅkam) literature.

Akattiyar

Sanskrit ‘*Agastya*,’ a legendary sage and culture-hero of the Tamils.

aṇaṇku

A term that denotes ‘impersonal, anonymous power, sacred power’ in Caṅkam literature.

Anubhuti

Equivalent word for ‘mysticism’ in Tamil.

Anpu

Love

aravāṇar

The Lord of all virtue

aram

virtue or righteousness

arul

Divine grace, an important doctrine in *Śaiva Siddhānta* theology. *Cēkkilār* used the term to *arul*, referred in this study to demonstrate, for instance, love, benevolence, favour, generosity that *Śiva* has for His devotees rather than elucidating the agreement and contradictions in the theological system of a particular *Śaiva* tradition.

aṭi

Foot; often used to referred to the feet of the Lord

aṭimai

Slave

aṭiyār

Devotee; ‘one who is at the feet (of the Lord)’

āṭkoḷ

Taking captive

Aṭṭavīraṭṭāṇam

The sites of the Eight Heroic Deeds of *Śiva* in the Tamil region

Atti-Natti

‘It is and it is not’; Jaina attitude to life.

Bhakti (S)

Devotion to God

Brahmin

Member of the priestly class in the Hindu

	system of four classes; the Brahmin class ranks highest in the general hierarchy of classes
Caṅkam	These are assemblies which flourished in the Tamil environment across the period between 150 B.C.E to 600 A.C.E. These assemblies composed of poets from various strata of Tamil society gave birth to Tamil classical literature which came to be known as <i>Caṅkam</i> literature.
Cariyai	One of the four ways of devotion in the <i>Śaiva Siddhanta</i> system
Cēkkiḷār	Author of the <i>Periya Purāṇam</i> , and was a renowned minister in the court of king <i>Kulōttuṇṅka II</i> (குலோத்துங்கசோழன்) (1133-1150 A.C.E).
Cēṅkōl centtamīl	Righteous sceptre It is the “standard, ‘correct’, ‘polished’ language sanctioned by the norm of <i>ilakkaṇam</i> (இலக்கனம்) and used in <i>ilakkiyam</i> (இலக்கியம்) as the linguistic vehicle of high literary culture.
Cēra	One of the three ancient Tamil kingdoms or ‘land’; the ruler of the Cēra kingdom
Cilappatikāram	‘Epic of the Anklet,’ Tamil epic of the late classical period.
Civācāriyār	A learned and initiated person in the Tamil <i>Śaiva</i> tradition, qualified to perform <i>Āgamic</i> rites.
Cōḷa	One of the three ancient Tamil kingdoms; the ruler of the <i>Cōḷa</i> land.
Icai	Music; musical Tamil; genres associated with music in Tamil literature.
īcaṇ	‘Lord’
Inpam	Ethics of Love
iraivan	It is used to denote ‘he who is highest’, ‘Lord’, and ‘king’
kadavul	A notion that could be understood as a synonym for the concept <i>aṇaṅku</i> . The term <i>kadavul</i> (கடவுள்) has been interpreted in different ways. The word <i>Ka+da</i> (க+ட) connote the sense of ‘movement’, ‘surpassing’ and ‘crossing over’. The verbal derivation is that ‘to traverse’, ‘to pass’ or to ‘transcend’.
Kailāsa (S)	Mountain, the abode of <i>Śiva</i> in the

kāmam	Himalayas.
Karma (S)	Erotic love
kaṭavuṭkarpu	Tamil <i>viṇai</i> (act, deed); the law of action leading to effect and rebirth.
King <i>Kulōttuṅka</i> II	Divine chastity
	A King under whose patronage, <i>Cēkkiḷār</i> wrote his <i>Periya Purāṇam</i> . It is generally accepted that <i>Anapāyaṇ</i> , the royal patron of <i>Cēkkiḷār</i> is none other than king <i>Kulōttuṅka</i> II (1133 A.C.E -1150 A.C.E).
Kiriyai	Ritual service; one of the four types of activities undertaken toward liberation according to <i>Śaiva Siddhanta</i> theology.
Kuṟuntokai	One of the eight anthologies of classical Tamil poetry.
Jñānam	Sanskrit <i>jñāna</i> , ‘wisdom,’ one of the four disciplines leading to liberation in <i>Śaiva Siddhanta</i> theology.
liṅgam (S)	‘Sign,’ phallus (as the male ‘sign’); symbol and an iconic image of <i>Śiva</i>
Malam	Taint
Maṇu	Also known as <i>Manu Needhi Cholan</i> was a legendary <i>Cōla</i> king believed to have killed his own son to provide justice to a Cow.
Maṇunīti Dharman	The Sustainer of the Moral Order
Maṇunīti	Law codes of Maṇu
Mantra (S)	Sacred chant; Vedic chant; the Vedas
Maravar	A Tamil community of the state of Tamil Nadu, southern India, and are one of the three branches of the <i>Mukkulath</i> or confederacy.
Māsu	Stain, taint, tarnish.
mei-jñānam	True understanding of the self
mei-yuṇarvu	The knowledge of the true nature of self or one’s feeling
meṇṭoṇṭar	‘Friendly’ servants of the Lord.
mōksa (S) or vitu in Tami	‘Liberation’ or ‘release’.
Murukaṇ	Tamil hill-god, the son of <i>Śiva</i>
Mūvaṛ mutalikaḷ	The three pioneer <i>Śaiva</i> Saints, viz. Campandar, Appar, Cuntarar
Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi	Responsible for compiling the first seven of twelve books of <i>Tirumuṟai</i> .
Na Ma Si Va Ya (Five-Letter-Prayer)	The five letter prayer is (நமசிவாய) ‘ <i>na ma si va ya</i> ’ (NB in roman script, this is five syllables of two letter each, but in Tamil script each syllable is a single letter). The

	syllables ‘na’ (ந) and ‘ma’ (ம) represent the bondage in which the human soul is trapped, ‘si’ (சி) and ‘va’ (வா) represent Śiva and his <i>Sakti</i> , and ‘ya’ (ய) represents the soul in between the two.
Nandi	It is the name for the bull which serves as the mount (Sanskrit: <i>Vahana</i>) of the god Śiva and as the gate keeper of Shiva and <i>Parvati</i> .
naṇṇeri	Righteous conduct, path of virtue and moral life.
Naṭarāja or Naṭarāca Śivan	Lord of Dance; Śiva as the cosmic dancer. It is indeed the favorite attribute used to denote Śiva in the <i>Periya Purāṇam</i>
nāṭu	Country, region, or realm; regional subdivision of the Tamil area.
Nāyaṇmār	‘Leaders’ (plural: <i>nāyaṇmār</i> : நாயன்மார்; singular: <i>nāyaṇār</i> : நாயனார்) who lived in the medieval Tamil period from the third to the ninth centuries after the Common Era.
nāyan	‘Master’ or ‘leader’.
Nīti	Justice or righteousness
Pantam	Bondage or <i>pantam</i> (பந்தம்) later becomes a important term in the Tamil Śaiva <i>Siddhanta</i> philosophical tradition, although <i>Cēkḱilār</i> uses it much less frequently than the ever-recurrent ‘repeated births’ (பெரும்பிறவி: <i>perum piravi</i>) and ‘evil deeds’ (தீவினை: <i>tīvinai</i>). It refers to the principle of causality where intent and actions of an individual influence the future of that individual.
Pāṇṭya	Also ‘ <i>Pāṇṭyan</i> ’; one of the three ancient Tamil kingdoms.
Pāśa (S)	(Tamil <i>pācam</i>) ‘fetter,’ the bonds of karma in Śaiva <i>Siddhanta</i> philosophy.
Pāśu (S)	The individual soul in Śaiva <i>Siddhanta</i>
Pati (S)	‘The Lord’ in Śaiva <i>Siddhanta</i>
Patti	Love of God
Periya Purāṇam	History of the Holy servants of the Lord
Pittan	<i>Cēkḱilār</i> portrays Śiva as one who acts with a sense of ‘madness’; ‘Śiva is the ‘madman, crowned with crescent moon’.
poruḷ	Refers to ethics of wealth in Tamil literature
puṇam	‘Exterior,’ dealing with war and public affairs; the ‘public’ genre of classical Tamil

Purāṇa (S)	poetry. Compendium of myths; a sacred text in Hinduism
Śaiva (S)	A worshiper of Śiva Śiva, composed by Appar, Cambandar, Cuntarar otherwise known as Tamil Vedas.
Śaiva-neri	Norms or tenets of the Śaiva ‘way of life’.
Sakti	Consort of Śiva
Śaiva Siddhanta (S)	The philosophical and theological system of the Tamil Śaiva sect.
Śiva-āṇantam	The bliss of being in Śiva
Śiva-jñānam	Truth of the knowledge of Śiva
Śiva-jñāni	One who has the knowledge of Śiva
Śiva-nēti	Justice according to Śaiva norm or tenets of the life.
Śiva-toṇṭar	Servants of the Śiva
Śiva-tontu	Service to Śiva
Sothiram	The first nine anthologies of Tirumuṛai are categorized as <i>sothiram</i> meaning ‘Hymns of Praise’ for Śiva.
summa iru	Used in the sense advise one ‘Be quiet or still’ to experience God.
Talaivan	Leader
tampirāṇ tōlaṇ	The companion of the Śiva
Tēvāram	A collection of devotional songs in honour of Śiva
Tillai	Cittambaram
Tirukkovai	‘Holy Works of Order’ composed by <i>manikkavacakar</i>
Tirukkuṛal	Venerable or sacred couplets which is considered as ‘the greatest ethical treatise written in the Tamil language’.
Tirumāl	He is the Hindu deity most popular amongst Tamils of Tamil nadu state in India and in the Tamil Diaspora. <i>Perumal</i> is also another name of Lord Viṣṇu.
Tirumandiram	The tenth collection of the <i>Tirumuṛai</i> is the mystical poems of <i>Tirumūlar’s Tirumandiram</i> or ‘Holy Invocation’; it is categorized as <i>sāsthiram</i> (சாஸ்திரம்) meaning the philosophical guidelines of Śaiva doctrine.
Tirumuṛai	<i>Tirumuṛai</i> (திருமுறை) or <i>Panniru Tirumuṛai</i> (பன்னிரு திருமுறை) forms the Tamil Śaiva Canon which comprises or brings together nearly 20,000 verses, the

Tiru nīlankaṇṭam	musings, meditations and affirmations of twenty-six singers or poets of South Indian Śaivite community, compiled by <i>Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi</i> (ca. 1000).
Tiruppācuram Ode	Śiva as ‘Dark-or Blue-Throated one’.
Tirut toṇṭat tokai	The <i>Campantar, nāyaṇār</i> ’s palm script on which was inscribed the glory of Śiva,
Tiruvācakam	The ‘Roll of the Holy Servants’ is the primary source material for the composition of the <i>Periya Purāṇam</i>
Tolkāppiyam	‘Holy Readings’ composed by <i>manikkavacakar</i>
	The date and the authorship of <i>Tolkāppiyam</i> (<i>Thonmai</i> : தொண்மை or <i>Tol</i> : தொல் ‘ancient’ or ‘old’ + <i>kāppiyam</i> : காப்பியம் epic: i.e. the ancient epic which safeguards the integrity of the Tamil language) are constantly debated in academic circles.
tōḷan	Friend
toṇṭar	‘Servants,’ or devotees of Śiva
Toṇṭarcīrparavurār	The singer of the glories of the servants.
Umā	Name of <i>Parvatī</i> , the Goddess, spouse of Śiva
Umāpati Civācārya	A Śaivite theologian of the fourteenth century who authored <i>Cēkkiḷār Nāyaṇār Purāṇam</i> (சேக்கிழார் நாயனார் புராணம்) or ‘The Story of <i>Cēkkiḷār Nāyaṇār</i> ’.
Utaman	In Tamil the word ‘utaman’ (உத்தமன்) is used to connote an excellence or virtues or great ‘man’
Vaikai	The Vaikai is a river in Madurai, Tamil Nadu state of southern India. It originates in the Periyar Plateau of the Western Ghats range, and flows northeast through the Kambam Valley, which lies between the Palni Hills to the north and the Varushanad Hills to the south.
Vaṇtoṇṭar’	‘Violent servant’
Vedas (S)	The Vedas are considered as the divine manifestation of the eternal word i.e. <i>vāk</i> . Their origin is ‘non-human authorship’ (<i>apauruṣya</i>). Therefore, they are hailed as revealed text or <i>Śruti</i> that which is ‘seen’, ‘heard’ and ‘communicated’ by the ancient <i>rṣis</i> or teachers. They are different from <i>Smṛti</i> texts which are ‘remembered’ by

	tradition by teachers. The Vedas are four: the <i>Ṛg</i> -Veda (collection of mantras), <i>Sāma</i> -Veda (collection of liturgical melodies), <i>Yajur</i> -Veda (collection of sacrificial formulas for rituals) and <i>Atharva</i> -Veda (magical mantras and spells).
Vedānta	The word <i>Vedānta</i> is a combination of two words: ‘ <i>Veda</i> ’ which means ‘knowledge’ and ‘ <i>anta</i> ’ which means ‘the end of’ or ‘the goal’ of. Thus <i>Vedānta</i> means ‘the end of knowledge’.
Vēlanāḍal	An ecstatic dance by a priest possessed by Vēlan (வேலன்) i.e. Murukan.
Vellala (S)	Tamil ‘vēlālar’; general term for a group of high-ranking non Brahmin castes in Tamilnadu.
Vīram	Heroism
Vīraṭṭāṇam	A place where <i>Śiva</i> is believed to have performed His cosmic deeds and destroyed the cities and addresses <i>Śiva</i> as the Lord of <i>Vīraṭṭāṇam</i> .
vīṭu	Liberation or release
Yāl	It is a direct ancestor of modern day Vēna or Lute. Many major Tamil classical literary masterpieces written during Caṇṇam period dating back 200 BC have mentioned yāl.
Yōga	All actions yoked to bodily discipline and meditation

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